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ABSTRACT

The papers contained in this volume offer the opinions and evidence of sixteen specialists on matters pertaining to literature for children and adolescents--the writing of literature, the selection of literature, and the role of literature in reading instruction. Taken together, they cover a wide range of grade levels and represent many points of view. Divided into three main sections--on appreciation and selection, techniques and types, and programs and projects--the papers include: "Fun and Facts in Writing of the West," "Old Values in New Books," "Selecting and Evaluating Materials for Recreational Reading," "Reading Literature Critically," "Let Them Listen," "Teaching the Reading of Plays," "Improving the Literature Program: Poetry," "The Storyteller's Role," "Gateway English--A Literature Program for Educationally Disadvantaged Students," "Junior Great Books Discussion Programs," "The Oregon Curriculum in Literature," "A Literature Program Matched to Students' Interests," "The Joy of Reading Rediscovered in High School Reading Centers," and "Sacred Cows: Real and Fancied--Evaluation of the Traditional Literature Program." (RB)

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IVORY, APES, AND PEACOCKS:

The Literature Point of View

SAM LEATON SEBESTA, *Editor*

University of Washington

Volume 12 Part 2

Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

CS 000 883

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Foreword

IN PLANNING THE PROGRAM for the 1966-67 IRA convention in Seattle, the president was especially interested in highlighting children's literature in as many ways and at as many times as possible and yet keep the whole program balanced. All day Friday two sequences were running concomitantly: "The Literature Program" and "Lifetime Reading Habits." The speakers were among the best in the nation. Thursday featured a major research report on children's literary choices and an address on ways of selecting and evaluating materials for recreational reading.

Most of the program on Saturday was given over to literature. In the Second General Session, May Hill Arbuthnot eloquently revealed "Old Values in New Books." Then at the annual Book-and-Author Luncheon, Ralph Moody, whose writings are devoted to picturing and interpreting the heroes of the West, told of "Fun and Facts in Writing of the West." Both of these speakers received a rising ovation from their audiences.

To Sam Sebesta was given the responsibility and pleasure of assembling the various presentations into this little volume, an offshoot of the annual Proceedings. Those of us who revel in the richness and high quality of publications for children will thoroughly enjoy what Sam Sebesta has brought to us here.

MILDRED A. DAWSON, *President*
International Reading Association
1966-1967

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Introduction

THE PAPERS BROUGHT TOGETHER in this volume were read at the Twelfth Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, May 3-6, 1967, in Seattle. They offer the opinions and evidence of sixteen specialists on matters pertaining to literature—the writing of literature, the selection of literature, and the role of literature in reading instruction. Taken together, they cover a wide range of grade levels, from primary to college; and they regard their tantalizing subject from many points of view.

What can be gained from reading the set of papers? For the educator or layman, there is, above all, delight. There is the delight one experiences when he shares an enthusiasm with a fellow enthusiast, similar to that of two travelers comparing their impressions of Greece or Expo 67. There is the delight of rediscovering well-loved titles and freshened techniques for teaching. In addition, there is something new to be gained: the special insights of Ralph Moody on how fiction and nonfiction blend to produce art; the suggestions of Winkley and Rhoads on how lively questions may be formulated to disclose meanings in literature; the possibilities uncovered by Kitzhaber, Schick, and Huck for enhancing literary enjoyment through adept analysis.

And throughout the volume there is the opportunity to enliven and expand one's operational concept of what the reading of literature is all about.

SAM LEATON SEBESTA, *Editor*

APPRECIATION AND SELECTION

RALPH MOODY, author of the autobiographical *Little Britches*, *Man of the Family*, and a host of other fine books about the West, delivered the following address from memory at IRA's Book-and-Author luncheon on May 6, 1967, at Seattle Center. Those who attended will long remember the vibrance and humor of the occasion and the special magic of a born author-lecturer.

Fun and Facts in Writing of the West

RALPH MOODY
Walnut Creek, California

NO OTHER AUTHOR could possibly have been as delighted as I at being invited to speak before this convention, for I owe the attainment of my goal in life entirely to reading.

In the San Francisco area I was for several years Exhibit A for the promotion of adult-education writing classes. They'd stand me up in front of a group of aspiring authors—most of them ladies about my own age—and tell them, "Look at him! He never went beyond the eighth grade in school, never tried to write professionally until he was fifty, and then wrote a best seller after attending an adult-education class for only six months. If he could do it, certainly you can," and they'd sign up in droves.

But I'd often be hemmed into a corner before I could reach the platform; and some nice little lady would ask, "Oh, Mr. Moody, when did you first become interested in writing?"

That is the only area in which I am unique as an author, for I alone can give an exact answer. I first became interested in writing in 1903, on the sixth day of June, at three-forty in the afternoon. That was when I got home with the report card saying that I had failed to pass from kindergarten into the first grade . . . because I couldn't write my name.

You see, I was left-handed at that time, but the teacher insisted upon my holding the pencil in my right hand; and I wasn't in favor of it, so I didn't concentrate as much as I might have on the subject of writing.

Since I couldn't write my name, of course I couldn't read the report card, so took it home happily. Mother was frying doughnuts when I got there. That, you must remember, was back in the days before electric ranges and poly-unsaturated fats. In

New England, doughnuts were fried in hog lard over a split-birch fire, and both made lots of smoke. When I opened our back door, the kitchen was blue with smoke and hotter than Tophet. As I held the card up to Mother, she wiped her hands on her apron and told me proudly, "Now you won't have to be in the baby class any more, and next fall you'll be a full-fledged first grader." But at a glance her eye took in the horrible truth, and she exclaimed, "What! Can't write your own name! Well, young man, we'll soon see what can be done about that."

She put the baby's highchair right beside that hot stove, lifted me into it, and turned the tray down in front of me. Then she went into the front room and brought a sheet of white paper and a pencil. She put the paper down on the tray and wrote RALPH MOODY in large letters, passed me the pencil, and told me, "You may take this pencil in either hand you wish, but that is your name; and if you make the same shaped marks I've made, you'll be writing your own name. Now, young man, I'm going out in the back yard to cut a switch; and if you can't write your name by the time I get back here, I shall use it."

My mother has always been a woman of her word, and I had a pretty good idea where she'd use that switch. Before she'd gone as far as the back door, I'd become interested in writing and have been ever since.

I can come almost that close to telling you the exact moment when I set authorship as my goal in life.

My father was born of deaf-mute parents in the backwoods of Maine. Those who came to the farm communicated with my father's parents in writing, so there was no opportunity for the children to learn oral language, though they talked fluently with their fingers and jabbered words of their own invention.

When my father was eight years old, his parents sent him to visit relatives so that he might learn to speak English. At the end of three months they heard he was going to school and surmised that he must already be able to talk enough to teach his brothers and sisters. So they brought him home, and he never again attended school.

When he was in his late teens, the safety bicycle—such as those we have now—was invented, and in his early twenties he won the New England bicycle-racing championship. As a result he became quite popular in the area and fell in love with the equally popular elocution teacher, Mary Emma Gould. She admired him more for his inborn character than for his athletic ability, married him, and became my mother.

Bicycle racing on hilly New England dirt roads was a grueling sport, and to win his championship without proper training, my father overtaxed and weakened his heart and lungs. Because of it he contracted tuberculosis when I was three years old, and we children were allowed little contact with him until, right after my eighth birthday, we moved to a Colorado ranch in hope that the high, dry climate would cure the disease. It was only then that I became well acquainted with him.

The ranch we moved to was barren except for cactus, Spanish bayonet, and buffalo grass. It was also at the end of the irrigation ditch, so we got little or no water; and most of our crops failed. But we kept a couple of cows, and a mile from our house the prairie fell away to Bear Creek Valley. There were tall trees and green grass there, and the creek was crystal clear from melting snow in the Rockies.

Sixty years ago tomorrow morning—the first Sunday in May, 1907—Father and I were out at the corral milking when the sky along the eastern horizon reddened as if the prairies were afire, and presently the sun peeped over Loretto Heights. I was watching it, my face turned to the side and my forehead resting against the brindle cow's belly when Father said, "This is going to be a glorious day, Son. Let's see if we can get Mother to put up a lunch and go for an all-day picnic down in Bear Creek Valley."

I finished milking the old brindle as fast as I could pump my hands, ran to the house, and propositioned Mother about a picnic. She and the rest of the children thought it was a fine idea, so early in the forenoon we all went down to the valley, and as she always did when we went on a picnic, Mother took a book along. That day the book was *John Halifax, Gentleman.*

At ninety-five, my mother is still the best oral reader I have ever heard. Sixty years ago she would sit with a book on her lap, glance down at the page for a moment, then look away and recite a half dozen or more sentences in so conversational a tone and manner that no one overhearing but not seeing her would believe she was reading.

When Mother read aloud, we children could do anything we liked except to interrupt without raising a hand. If a hand went up, she would stop to explain; and it was sometimes necessary, for she always read adult books. That Sunday forenoon I sat cross-legged in the meadow beside the creek, listening to the story and looking for a four-leafed clover between my knees. She had been reading for probably an hour or more when I felt a lump rising in my throat and tears gathering in my eyes. Although there had been nothing in the story to directly foretell it, I knew that little blind Muriel, John Halifax's daughter, was going to die.

I looked up just in time to see my father wipe a tear off his cheek, and when my mother noticed it and paused, he told her, "Mame, you're an artist. When you read, you hold my heartstrings in the throb of your voice."

Mother shook her head emphatically and told him, "No, Charlie, I am not an artist. The artist was the author who selected from all the words in this wonderful language of ours those that would best enable him to transfer his own thoughts and feelings and emotions from his mind to the mind of a reader. All I can do is to lend expression to the words he selected." Then she went on reading, and I went back to hunting a four-leafed clover, telling myself that some day I would be one of the men who selected the words.

From that day I never read a book or story that I didn't read from the viewpoint of the author, realizing that he had constructed each sentence, paragraph, scene, and chapter for the prime purpose of transferring his beliefs, ideas, mental pictures, and emotions to his reader's mind with the greatest clarity that lay within his ability. If I found an emotion being more than mildly stirred, I went back to reread and try to find out how the author had gone about it, and to discover his purpose in wanting to move me in that particular way at that precise point in his story. Whenever I found myself feeling that I actually knew a character in a novel, I realized that the author, through his artistry in the selection of words, had endowed an entirely imaginary being with life, so I went back to read the material over and over and over in an effort to find out how this breath of life had been created.

My father worked himself to death when I was eleven years old, and left my mother with nothing but memories and his six children, one of them not yet born. Thereafter, until I had completed the eighth grade, I went to school on any day that I couldn't earn fifty cents or more. I was so fortunate as to have an eighth-grade English teacher who believed I had writing talent. Knowing that I would be unable to go on to high school, she was determined that I should find work where I would be under the influence of writers. The week my class graduated she found me a job as printer's devil with the *Boston Transcript* at two dollars and a half a week. But our family was badly in need of money, and I found myself a job running an elevator for four dollars a week, so it may be that a dollar and a half a week postponed the start of my writing career for thirty-five years.

Even though I couldn't take the job with the *Transcript*, I was determined that I would some day be an author. So I wrote in my first diary that I was going to marry early, raise a large family, work as hard as I could, and save fifty thousand dollars by the time I was fifty. Then, with my children grown, I would retire, go back to school, and get the education that a man must have before he can hope to write successfully for publication.

I wasn't able to marry as early as I'd hoped to; we didn't have a large family, and I've been engaged in the chain restaurant business most of my adult life. In 1948 our two sons were in military service in Germany; the University of California had opened an extension school around the corner from one of our San Francisco restaurants, and I'd been reasonably successful in business. It seemed to me that, although I was still a few months short of fifty years old, the time might be right for me to start getting the literary education I had always coveted, but I was more than a bit concerned about my lack of high school. One afternoon I went around to the school, approached the lady behind the admissions desk diffidently, and asked, "Does the school have writing classes?"

She sized me up quickly and replied, "There will be a short-story class for beginners."

"Do you take eighth graders?" I asked hopefully.

"Do you have eight dollars?" she asked in reply.

I did, so found myself the most ancient member of a short-story class of about seventy. Our assignment for the semester was to write a five-thousand-word story from our own experiences. My only experience that seemed unusual enough for a story was that I'd first worked away from home when I was nine years old, as waterboy on a Colorado cattle ranch, so I wrote of that. When, in mid-December, my manuscript was returned, the professor had written on a corner of the first page, "Don't let this go for a short story; expand into a book."

It was nine-thirty in the evening when that manuscript was returned, and I think I ran all the way back to my office. I got out my secretary's typewriter, rolled in a sheet of white paper, and sat down to expand my story into a book.

Then reality engulfed me. Even though I'd attended a University of California extension class for three months, I was still an eighth grader, and it would be ridiculous for me to try writing a book for publication before I'd had the proper schooling in composition, rhetoric, and grammar. Furthermore, there was nothing about my having been a waterboy on a cattle ranch that was worthy of a book.

For hours I sat staring at that page of white paper, but my thoughts were back in the days of my childhood. Then, I had believed that my mother read aloud to entertain her children. But as I sat there looking back across the years I understood that she had never for a moment read for any reason but to entertain and educate her entirely unschooled husband. When I was a boy, I had only known that I loved the tall, quiet man who was my father. As a man myself, I realized for the first time that mine had been a most unusual father, that in the thirty-six years he had lived he had built for himself the finest philosophy of life of any man I had ever known. And I was overwhelmed with shame; for in the more than twenty years I'd had my sons, I had failed to teach them as much about the values in which I believed as my unschooled father had taught me of his beliefs in the three years I had actually known him.

It was too late for me to attempt the teaching that I had neglected so many years, but our sons had always liked to have me tell them stories of my boyhood. It occurred to me that if I wrote for them stories of our family's early years in Colorado, I might be able to acquaint them with the grandfather who had died so long before they were born, and that they might learn from him as I myself had learned. It also occurred to me that if I wrote as though I were still eleven years old, and simply storytelling instead of writing, I wouldn't have to expose my ignorance of rhetoric and composition to my university-educated sons.

I was worried, though, that our boys would detect the purpose of my writing, for I knew only too well that preaching or any obvious attempt to cram a philosophy of life down the throats of boys in their early twenties has a gagging effect. The thought of gagging again took me back to my boyhood, for my mother was then a strong believer in what she called "the spring purge." On three successive mornings in early April she'd line us up in a row and dole out spoonfuls of sulfur and molasses. Then, on the fourth morning, we'd get a tablespoonful of castor oil. My brothers and sisters despised the oil as much as I did, but they could swallow it. I couldn't. It wasn't that I wouldn't try, but that it always gagged me. So when Mother reached me in the line, she'd coat a clean spoon by dipping it in the syrup bucket, pour on just as much castor oil as she'd given the other children, and cover the nauseous stuff with a little more syrup. In that way I never tasted the oil, as it didn't gag me, but it did me just as much good as it did my brothers and sisters.

In writing for our boys I decided to use anecdotes and stories from my experiences as waterboy on the cattle ranch or trick rider in roundups as syrup to disguise my primary purpose. I'd write of actual experiences, but I'd combine all the cowboys with whom I'd ridden into one fictitious character whom I'd call Hiram Beckman.

At two-thirty in the morning I began hunting out the right keys on my secretary's typewriter, and by daylight I had half a dozen of the worst-looking pages of manuscript ever typed. For the next three months I spent every minute I could spare from my business at that typewriter, reliving my boyhood and selecting the words which I thought would best enable me to present my father truthfully and honestly to my sons. At first the pictures that rose before my mind were somewhat blurred by the forty years or more that had intervened, but with each day at the typewriter they became clearer, sharper, more abundant; and from them I tried to choose those that would present every facet of my father's character. Or, if I wanted to present some particular facet and couldn't recall an incident that would clearly show it, I invented one.

By early spring the bottom drawer of my secretary's desk was filled with pages, and I'd become anxious for the story of my father to reach other boys than my own. I wrapped the pages in a piece of brown paper, took them to my night school teacher, and said, "You're going up to your ranch for the Easter holiday, aren't you? Would you take this stuff along and glance through it enough to see if you think there's anything here that is worthy of publication. If you think there is, I'd appreciate your help in finding a professional author whom I could engage to work it over and rewrite it in publishable form."

Three days later he brought the package to my office, laid it on my desk, and told me, "My friend, you've written your own book. Have it typed professionally and send it to a New York agent."

At about the same time, my mother's elder brother, for whom I was named, went on an excursion to the Hawaiian Islands, and wrote that he would visit us a couple of days on his way home. He arrived on the same day the manuscript was returned by the typist. It was a rainy April day, with the temperature at about fifty degrees, and although Uncle had lived his entire life in Maine, he nearly froze in California. To keep his mind off his suffering, my wife set the heat up to eighty and let him read my manuscript. Before he left for Boston the next morning, I pleaded, "Please don't mention to my mother that I've tried to write a book. That teacher has become a friend of mine, and I'm afraid he's let it influence his judgment, so I don't want anyone else to know about the manuscript until it has at least been read by a New York literary agent."

Uncle assured me he'd keep mum, so I mailed the manuscript to the recommended agent and told my wife that we shouldn't expect to hear anything from it for a month or two . . . but I didn't mention that I'd sent it off by air mail. Three days later I received a telegram from the agent, reading, "I have titled your script *Little Britches,* and Norton has taken it for publication. Letter follows."

The very next day I had a letter from my mother, saying, "Brother Ralph tells me you have written a book about the family, and I must insist upon editing it before it goes to a publisher."

From the time I've been old enough to remember, my mother has insisted that I tell "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," for she has suspected me of having a creative memory. I was convinced that this belief was at the root of her insistance on editing my manuscript. I was also convinced that, if given the opportunity she'd edit me right out of the authoring business.

There seemed only one hope. My mother, like a great many people of her generation, learned her reading from the Bible, and at the same time learned to accept the printed word as gospel truth; but she had no such illusions about typewritten material. I wrote right back to her, starting my letter with one of the blackest lies imaginable. I told her I was terribly sorry her letter hadn't arrived a week earlier, for then there would have been no problem involved in sending her the manuscript for editing, but that, unfortunately, since it had already been taken by a publisher in its present form, it was now too late to make changes. I promised, however, that she would see the first copy of the book to come off the press and that I'd make a deal with the publisher to destroy all remaining copies if she felt that I had done the family any injury or misrepresented the way in which we used to live.

She reluctantly agreed, and I made a deal with the Norton Company that, in case of her disapproval, all copies of the book should be destroyed and that I would reimburse them for all their cost and expenses in connection with it.

It had taken me only three months to write the book, but I'd found the writing such fun that I'd written nearly twice too much. It took me six months to cut it back to a reasonable length. So it was more than a year from the time the Norton Company contracted for the book to the time the first set of pages came off the printing press. I went to New York at once, got a set of them, a set of boards and a jacket, brought them back to San Francisco, and had the first copy of the book bound there. I sent it to my mother in Boston by air mail, and three evenings later she phoned me, almost in tears, "Oh, Son, why did you do it?" she pleaded. "It's just a pack of lies. I didn't keep the broom behind the kitchen door; I kept it in that little cupboard your father made for me. I never even heard of a cowhand named Hiram Beckman, and you know very well that I wouldn't have allowed you to work with any man until I was well enough acquainted with him to know that his influence wouldn't be harmful to you."

After ten dollars and fifty cents' worth of long-distance phone call, I was able to convince Mother that I hadn't actually injured the family, even though Hi Beckman was a composite character and I might have failed to remember a few incidents exactly as they actually happened.

Horsethief Thompson, a white-whiskered old fellow who lived with an even more ancient Indian in the foothills of the Rockies, was the first frontiersman we met in Colorado, and he was responsible for my first attempt to write history. He had run away from his parents' Missouri homestead in the 1850's, and, nearly starved to death, was picked up on the Colorado prairies by Ute Indians. They adopted him into the tribe, and he became their most successful horsethief, an accomplishment of which he was tremendously proud. Kit Carson was then Indian Agent for the Utes, became the boy's hero, and took him along as camp boy when appointed lieutenant colonel of the First New Mexico Volunteers at the outbreak of the Civil War.

My mother has always been a pushover for indigents, hobos, or anyone else with an ill-cared-for look. By the time we'd been in Colorado a couple of months, Horsethief Thompson began arranging his trips to town in such a way as to bring him back past our place just before suppertime, and I never knew him to refuse supper, a night's lodging, and breakfast before he went on to the mountains. To me those were wonderful visits. Old Horsethief could—and did—show seventeen bullet and arrow scars on various parts of his anatomy, and he never ran out of stories about his hero, Kit Carson. And with every story the old man told I became a more devoted Carson admirer.

Not long after my second book was published, Bennett Cerf came to San Francisco to speak at an Authors' Guild meeting. During dinner he said, "Ralph, we'd like you to write a Landmark Book about your favorite Western historical character. Who'll it be?"

"Kit Carson," I told him.

"Oh, no, not Carson!" he said. "He's been done to death. Think of somebody else."

After the meeting I drove Bennett to the airport, and just before boarding the plane he asked, "Decided who you'd like to write a Landmark book about?"

"Kit Carson," I told him.

That time he explained patiently that there would be no market for another Carson book; that I'd waste any time I spent writing one, and that Random House would lose any money put into the publication. "Take a week or so to think of somebody else you'd like to write about," he told me, "then drop me a line at New York so we can make up a contract for you."

I didn't write, but Bennett phoned me at home a couple of weeks later, and again I said, "Kit Carson."

When he grudgingly agreed, I told him about old Horsethief and asked which he'd like, the stories or a researched biography of Carson. He said to give him the stories by all odds. I did, and a couple of weeks after I'd sent in the manuscript, he phoned again, saying the book might make a couple of dollars after all; the Junior Book of the Month Club would take it if I could corroborate the stories by tying them into accepted American history.

It was then I began learning that fun and fiction are far more abundant than facts in much of the history of the American West.

I first consulted our local research librarian who gathered together for me the five books that, in addition to the writings of John Charles Fremont, were considered to be "accepted history" concerning Carson's life. Three of them were apparently autobiographical. The first was *The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson, the Nestor of the Rocky Mountains, from Facts Narrated* *by Himself*, by Dr. De Witt Peters, published in 1858, the first edition of which contains a certificate signed by Carson at Taos on November 3, 1858, stating that Dr. Peters is his only authorized biographer. The second was *Kit Carson's Own Story of His Life as Dictated to Col. and Mrs. D. C. Peters about 1856-57 and Never Before Published*, by Blanche C. Grant, published in 1926. The third was *Kit Carson's Autobiography*, a slightly edited and annotated publication of a handwritten manuscript discovered in a trunk of family papers by Dr. Peters' only surviving son nearly fifty years after the original publication of his father's book.

After having two imperfect typed copies of the manuscript made, the son sold the original, which is now in the Newberry Library at Chicago. He then sold one of the typed copies to a California student of Carson's career, telling him that the original was written by his mother while Kit dictated the story of his life during his frequent visits to Dr. Peters throughout 1856 and 1857. The California student published a few extracts from the typescript, then turned it over to Blanche Grant, together with the story of the autobiography's origin as told him by Dr. Peters' son.

Evidence strongly indicates that the son knew absolutely nothing concerning the subject and that he invented the entire story. Although Dr. Peters had been an army surgeon in New Mexico from 1854 until the early fall of 1856, he then went abroad and states in the 1873 edition of his Carson biography that he remained in Europe until 1860. In an existing letter which he wrote his sister in September, 1859, he tells her that he is still a bachelor, so there was no Mrs. Peters at the time Kit "dictated" his biography. Futhermore, the handwriting of the biography is entirely different in character from that of still-existing letters written by Mrs. Peters.

Who did the original writing has never been positively proved, but available evidence, together with a little reasoning and imagination, points strongly to Jesse B. Turly.

Although among Kit Carson's least noteworthy accomplishments, his guiding John Charles Fremont—the self-styled pathfinder—in his Johnny-come-lately explorations of the West brought him fame. Fremont wrote glowing accounts of his pathfinding explorations, ninety percent of it straight fiction, but in many of the articles Kit Carson was given credit for fantastic feats of frontiersmanship and daring. Dime novelists with even wilder imaginations further distorted Fremont's fiction by presenting Kit as a fabulous superman, exploiting him, and cashing in on his fame.

Kit had never been paid for his services under Fremont in the Mexican War, and in 1856 he was having a hard time as a poorly paid Indian agent supporting his rapidly growing family. Although unable to read, or to write more than his own name, he probably knew of the rubbish being published about him and reasoned that the authentic story of his experiences should have a market value. Or it may be that Jesse Turly conceived the idea, for he had been a friend of Kit's since boyhood, was fairly well schooled, and had been a merchant in the Santa Fe trade for more than thirty years. Whatever the circumstances, there is good evidence that the writing was done in the summer and fall of 1856, not from dictation—Kit spoke the patois of the illiterate backwoodsman—but from stories he told of his travels and experiences, set down on paper in the best English of which the scribe was capable. Furthermore, it is certain that the biography was written for sale, as the final sentence, just above Kit's signature, reads, "The foregoing I hereby transfer to Mr. Jesse B. Turly to be used as he may deem proper for our joint benefit."

One can only surmise that Turly deemed it proper to sell all rights in the biography to Dr. Peters, who had probably known that the writing was in progress at the time he left New Mexico to go abroad. In any case, Carson's certificate, dated at Taos on November 3, 1858, naming Dr. Peters as his only authorized biographer, is in the same handwriting as the biography itself, and it is not Dr. Peters' writing.

It may well be that the doctor feared for the value of his purchase, for Kit Carson was a very humble man. In relating his experiences as a beaver trapper he simply told of his travels and activities year by year, playing down the dangers encountered and his own part in surmounting them. Or possibly Dr. Peters believed he would have trouble in selling his book unless he outdid the dime novelists in sensationalism. Whatever the reason, he expanded the biography to more than four times its original length, stuffing it with fiction so fantastic as to make the whole book ridiculous. But, amazingly, the Peters book has become not only accepted history of the American West but a prime source book for researchers. Although in *Kit Carson's Own Story of His Life* Miss Grant stuck rather closely to the typescript from the original biography, she included—and added her own touch to—a few of Dr. Peters' Fictitious gems.

After comparing all three versions of the Carson biography and weeding out the obvious fiction, I could only come to the conclusion that Kit had forgotten or become confused regarding his whereabouts on certain dates, for I was well acquainted with the Rocky Mountains and knew that he would have had to travel by helicopter to get from one place to the other in the time reported.

Next, I tackled *Kit Carson Days,* a two-volume work by Edwin Sabin, published in 1935. Sabin's research for this book was so extensive and meticulous that it required nearly half a lifetime. From previously undiscovered diaries and traders' journals, from military-post and Indian-agent reports, and from receipts for furs turned in at widely separated trading posts, he dug up almost irrefutable proof of Kit Carson's activities and whereabouts during his beaver-trapping years. Most of this data proved him to have been right where he said he was in his biography and at the exact time he said he was there; but during 1836 and 1837 several pieces of evidence strongly indicated that he was elsewhere, hundreds of miles away. Sabin tried to reconcile these differences by having Carson and his trapper band make long treks through rugged mountains at speeds I knew to be impossible. These attempts at reconciliation simply strengthened my belief that Kit's memory was by no means the infallible recording instrument that both Fremont and Sabin claimed it to be.

Finally I read *Kit Carson, The Happy Warrior of the Old West,* by Stanley Vestal (Dr. Walter Campbell), published in 1928. It is based on Fremont's accounts of his explorations, Peters' book (with most of the chaff winnowed out), and delightful anecdotes gathered from oldtimers of the Rockies, such as the stories Horsethief Thompson used to tell. These latter transform Kit from an unbelievable superman to a living human being with all the frailties common to mankind, including a tremendous inferiority complex, but with a sense of honor and decency that was rare indeed among American mountain men. It was customary for beaver trappers to acquire anywhere from one to a dozen temporary Indian concubines each trapping season, and many of them sired scores of half-breed children whom they never saw. Kit Carson had no concubines. In 1835 he fell in love with Waa-nibe, the seventeen-year-old daughter of an Arapaho chief, married her in the traditional Arapaho blanket ceremony, and they had one daughter whom Kit named Adeline.

Vestal tells vividly of the wedding, of several journeys on which Waa-nibe accompanied Kit and his trapper band during 1836 and 1837, of his taking her back to her people for the birth of their child, of Waa-nibe's death, and of Kit in his grief taking his motherless daughter to St. Louis to be raised and educated by his sister.

I found the Vestal book not only delightful but amazing, for in it were the clues to Kit's forgetfulness regarding his whereabouts at certain times during 1836 and 1837. The course of expeditions on which Waa-nibe accompanied him and his trapper band during those two years could be corroborated by evidence turned up in Sabin's research, but in relating the story of his life to his biographer Kit placed himself elsewhere, usually at considerable distance. He certainly hadn't forgotten, but during the Mexican War Fremont had sent him to Washington with dispatches. He had met President Polk, been entertained at Senator Benton's home, and had undoubtedly learned that civilized society looked upon squaw men with contempt. It seems quite possible that Kit, with his aching inferiority complex, was simply trying to avoid contempt by placing himself elsewhere than with his long-dead Indian wife, thus adding another page of fiction to the history of the West.

Of course some fiction is added to history by authors with creative memories, and it may attain the status of fact through corroboration by an authority whose mental pictures have been altered by the fiction itself.

Two years after my mother objected to *Little Britches* as being simply a pack of lies, my wife and I drove East. When we were preparing to return, Mother said, "I believe I'll ride along with you children. I've never seen California and would like to."

"That would be entirely too hard a trip for a woman of eighty," I told her. "I often drive six or seven hundred miles a day, and it would tire you to death. Wait till we get back to San Francisco and I'll send you an airline ticket."

"No," Mother said, "I think I'll ride along with you," and she did.

At Denver I had to speak at the Press Club, and Mother worried for fear I couldn't hold my own against prying reporters. When I was ready to leave the hotel, she said, "Son, I think I shall go along with you," and she did.

I spoke for maybe twenty minutes and then said, "You must realize that my book is probably inaccurate in many respects, for I wrote it entirely from my own viewpoint as if I were ten years old. But I would like to introduce someone who saw the life we lived in those days from an adult viewpoint; this is my mother."

Mother rose and was given quite a hand. Then they asked her to say a few words, and she did . . . for about forty-five minutes. She told them all about keeping the broom behind the kitchen door, of my working with a cowboy named Hiram Beckman who was so fond of her baked beans and brown bread that he often rode home for supper with me on a Saturday evening, and of a dozen or more other happenings of those long ago years—every one of them an anecdote I'd invented to show some phase of my father's character. She wasn't lying. She'd simply read the book so many times that her mental pictures had become completely altered, and it is this process that alters our recollections.

So you see, there are many ways in which the history of the American West has been infused with fiction, bringing it vividly to life by adding fun to facts.

Leading authority on children's literature and distinguished author of *Children and Books*, MRS. ARBUTHNOT here presents her critical survey of noteworthy publications in the field. The bibliography, together with the expert's trenchant comments, makes this a most valuable contribution to the lore of literature.

Old Values in New Books

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A YOUNG MAN opening his birthday presents uncovered a book. He held it up gaily and said, "Look, it's a book! Does anyone read anymore?" Everyone laughed, but actually his question was not too satirical. When you consider television, radio, and all the other mass media that are making entertainment and information visible and audible with the minimum effort, it seems reasonable to ask, "Why should anyone read nowadays, and who does?"

Obviously someone reads because publishers' lists grow longer each year, and libraries report increased patronage both in their adult and juvenile departments; so people are reading and the question is, "Why do they read?"

Information, sounds dull but isn't

One of the most obvious reasons why both children and adults turn to books is to secure further information about some area of knowledge that has caught their interest. Most children have a driving curiosity to know a hundred things in a hurry, as their incessant "why's" and "what's" indicate. And if they lack this hungry curiosity of the mind, it is possible that the new informational books will wake them up. These are no longer thin and dull but beautiful to look at and good to read. Even for the primary there are such delightful introductions to science as Alice Goudy's *Houses From the Sea*, about sea shells, and her *Butterflies*, both illustrated by Adrienne Adams and reliable as well as a treat for the eyes (*15*). Franklyn Branley, astronomer for the Hayden Planetarium, who writes with charm and authority has given them such notable books as *Flash, Crash and Roll, A Book* *of Planets for You, The Sun, Our Nearest Planet* and some dozen others as well as that Christmas treasure of fine bookmaking and scientific facts, *The Christmas Sky,* an explanation of the mysterious Christmas star (*2*).

Informational books for the middle and older children include writers who command the respect of adult readers and have carried such writing beyond mere authenticity into the realm of literature. Examples are Mary Renault's *The Lion At the Gateway* (*30*), Gerald Johnson's *America: A History for Peter* (*18*), Anne Terry White's *The First Men in the World* (*37*), Margaret Mead's *People and Places* (*25*), Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (*7*), and Isaac Asinov's *Kingdom of the Sun* (*1*). These are only a few informational books for children and youth that adults can also profit by reading.

Biography, the hero image

Progressing from factual books to fiction is biography. It is a hybrid genre because, being factual, it should be accurate but as a branch of literature it must, like the story, have theme, unity, and appealing style. From the child's point of view both historical fiction and biography tell a story, and from both the hero image emerges clearly. We know a child imitates what he admires, and it would be sad indeed if his hero image should grow chiefly from the gun-toting heroes of the Westerns or the murderous gangsters of the underworld thrillers. But teachers and parents ask incredulously, "Do you think the Founding Fathers can compete with television and moving picture violence?"

Yes, with a little help from you they can. Even children as young as five to seven or eight get off to a lively start with those splendid old picture biographies of the D'Aulaires', *Leif Ericson, Benjamin Franklin,* and *Abraham Lincoln* (*11*), along with Alice Dalgliesh's *The Columbus Story* (*10*).

For the middle and upper grades there are innumerable examples, two of which are chosen because they illustrate two important facets of biography. None is more deftly constructed than Margaret Coit's recent *Andrew Jackson* (*9*). As you would expect of a Pulitzer Prize winner, the author documents even this brief book, and documentation is far too infrequent in juvenile biographies. Now, of course, we know children are not going to read footnotes; lots of adults don't read them either, but somewhere, in the back of the book perhaps, the adult who guides a child's reading should be able to find a reasonable number of sources—books, diaries, letters, and other valid references. To return to Coit's book, it is as fast moving as young Jackson himself. Even in the first brief chapter of only nine pages she manages to give the family background of her hero, his poverty, stubborn fiery nature, and the pressing need he felt to grow up quickly to adult responsibilities. She shows also the strange paradoxes of his complex character from which so many of his difficulties stemmed.

Another biography that is also documented and as absorbing to read as fiction is Nardi Campion's *Patrick Henry, Firebrand of the Revolution* (6). The author has the courage to give an unvarnished account of her hero's lazy, irresponsible childhood and youth. But she shows also the change that came slowly when this happy-go-lucky young man fell under the spell of a great ideal—to free his young country from the unjust rule of the English crown. This dream so possessed young Patrick that he turned his considerable talents to further the cause and became the inspired spokesman for the revolution, not only for Virginia but New England as well. The careless easygoing Patrick was replaced by the dedicated patriot who served his country and his state honorably and well.

Biographies that show this changing, growing character of famous men are important to children and youth who, just because they are young and inexperienced, tend to accept their own failures and limitations as conclusive. Such biographies show men doggedly picking themselves up after failure, keeping their self-respect and their eyes on distant goals despite limitations.

But children must not think you have to be dead or a genius in order to be a hero. They must, in their reading, discover the same growing pains, dogged persistence, and courage in obscure, everday folk. So we turn from biography to fiction and the bright story world of children's books.

For the youngest . . . reassurance, abstractions, awareness

One thing picture stories for the very young have done beautifully over the years is to give these uncertain little pilgrims a sense of security. For example, Robert McCloskey's two charming stories about Sal and his *Time of Wonder* are all reassurance (*23*). It is also the *leitmotif* of the two recent *Tomten* books from the Swedish by Astrid Lindgren (*21*). No one can read or look at those books with their lonely winter landscapes, prowling cat or stealthy fox, and the little Tomten quietly guarding the farm people and animals, without feeling snug and safe. They are comforting books for the small fry.

But what of the plot story for the youngest? Except for the folk tales and the mischievous and interminable *Curious George* (*31*), plot seems to have vanished from the picture stories. No more sinning and repenting, as in *Peter Rabbit;* no more wrestling with big bad wolves as in the folk tales; no more shipwrecks or falling off bridges as in *Little Tim* and *Madeline;* no more suspense, rousing climaxes, and satisfying conclusions. In the picture-story world today things are mild as cottage cheese, and in place of plot we have a lot of little "awareness" books about darkness or sunshine; wetness or cold; or prettily illustrated tracts on friendship, love, sharing, and similar abstractions. Oh well, adults have always enjoyed preaching to the young while the young go bouncing by looking for action and finding more of it on television than in their books. There are, however, some happy signs that the plot story is returning to enliven picture stories for the youngest.

A little action, please

In 1963, for instance, Carol Fenner created an amusing story, *Tigers in the Cellar,* about a little girl who scares herself into a dream world of wild action but is brought firmly back to earth by a casual mother saying, "Nonsense, now go pick up your clothes" (*12*). Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (*33*) is a similar self-made fantasy, and so is Mark Taylor's amusing *Henry the Explorer* (*34*). No scare in this one, but a child's actively imaginative play that makes a full circle back to reality and the omnipresent adults. But the Caldecott Medal winner for 1967, Evaline Ness' *Sam, Bangs and Moonshine,* is indeed a prize winner (*26*). The author's illustrations over the past few years have been sheer delight, but in this book she has proved again that she can also write an original and absorbing story. Her earlier *Serafina February* was such a book and the later one is a small masterpiece. Sam, short for Samantha, cannot tell real from the preposterous moonshine she makes up —as a mermaid for a mother, a baby kangaroo for a pet, and her cat Bangs, being able to talk. Indeed, it is Bangs who tells her she is talking "flummadidle," and her father warns her that talking "moonshine spells trouble." But not until Sam's wild inventions had sent her very best friend and her beloved Bangs into grave danger, did Sam learn the necessity for "talking real." This is a unique suspense story with some of the artist's finest pictures, and at the end the frightened, teary-eyed Sam is a repentant and convincing heroine.

Nonconformists and rebels

Sam brings us to a theme that is not new in children's books but is certainly receiving new emphasis these days, and that is the case of the nonconformist or out-and-out rebel. Sam was such a child and so was Rebecca Caudill's little mountaineer in *Did You Carry the Flag Today, Charley?* (*8*). Charley, "four goin' on five," has more curiosity than conformity and is taking along to the head start school all his amiable but firm intentions to follow his own exploratory ends. Charley's mysterious plans and his firm aversion to books have the patient teachers intrigued but completely baffled. The episodes, besides being funny, present one of the pleasantest pictures of a good school and understanding teachers that we have had. It is also good to report that in the end Charley really does merit and win the coveted honor of carrying the flag today.

Then we come to that controversial book by Louise Fitzhugh, *Harriet the Spy* (*13*). Someone tells the story of three teachers discussing the book. The first one said, "Well, I hope I never have a Harriet in my room!" The second one said, "Well, I hope I do." The third one thought a minute and then said, "If I do ever have a Harriet, I hope I have brains enough to discover her." For Harriet has great potentials. She has a notebook in which she is forever scribbling. Unfortunately, she records not merely items related to her secret life as a spy but also malicious comments on her classmates. So, of course, when the children find this book, they gang up on her and Harriet is definitely out. With ostracism she goes from bad behavior to worse, and while the conclusion is hopeful, it is not wholly conclusive. Was there ever such a child as Harriet? Very likely, and certainly today's children have accepted Harriet and her urban adventures with enthusiasm. Whether or not you like this book and its sequel, they are definitely alive, convincing, and contemporary.

Moving towards greater maturity of content and reading skills, 1966 gave us three strong books about young delinquents-in-the-making, rebels all. The first of these is by a Southern writer whose books are worth watching for, Robert Burch (5). His *Queenie Peavey* is a deeply moving picture of the way in which a family tragedy can scar a child. Queenie is tender hearted, intelligent and loving, but she is rapidly developing into a defiant rebel. All her love is given to her pet rooster, the little colored children next door, and to her brutal absentee father whom she has idealized out of all reality. So when the children at school taunt her about her jailbird father, she goes berserk, and unfortunately her deadly rock-throwing aim finally gets her into serious trouble. Queenie is saved from the reformatory only by a patient, understanding principal and a wise old judge. The latter tells her she has been "living under the shadow of the jail" and it is time for her to come out and be herself. This book is grim realism but with relieving touches of humor and sweetness. The two faces of Queenie—one, hard and defiant, and the other, loving and vulnerable—are so skillfully revealed that many adult readers wondered why this book was not at least a runner up for the 1967 Newbery Medal.

The other two books about youthful rebels are for teen-age readers. The first one is Margaret McPherson's *Rough Road*, a powerful, well-written story about the sheep raisers in the wild country of Skye (*23*). Jim, an orphan, is living in a foster home where he is starved and brutally mistreated, so when a young drover is kind to the boy, Jim worships him. But the idol has feet of clay and fails the boy in his great need. Disillusioned, crushed by near tragedy and false accusations, Jim gets another chance, and through his heartbreak responds not too hopefully but with courage.

The second book is Dorothy Broderick's *Hank*, not a pretty story but useful and competently handled (*3*). Like Queenie Hank adored his father, so when his idol walked out on the family and was never seen again, Hank was at first incredulous, then outraged and fair prey for a gang of young hoodlums looking for excitement. Hank's step-by-step progress to the very edge of crime and his last-minute attempts to extricate himself build up suspense and a rousing climax. It is good to add that in each one of these books there is a sympathetic adult trying desperately to penetrate the bravado and bitterness of the youthful rebel and to help him help himself.

Just plain cheerful, thank you

Such books bear witness to the fact that the new realism for children and youth seems a bit grimmer than usual. This is probably a wholesome trend considering our "Little Lord Fauntleroy" past. But let's not lose our heads. The rebels will always be with us but so, we hope, will the Little Eddies, Henry Huggins, and that last adventure of the older Henry, *Henry Reed's Baby Sitting Service* (*32*). These heroes are also convincing and contemporary. They are earnestly trying to do the right and frequently making a mess of it but enjoying life thoroughly. Their enjoyment is contagious, and quite a bit of cheerfulness in children's books will not come amiss in these troublous times.

Speaking of cheerfulness, children should not miss the books by that Australian writer Joan Phipson (*29*) and the gay nonsense of our own Sid Fleishman (*14*). Joan Phipson's *Boundary Riders, Family Conspiracy, Threat to the Barkers,* and *Birkin* give wonderful pictures of family ups and downs and the remarkable resourcefulness and competence of children on their own. The books are plot stories with lots of action, suspense, and satisfying conclusions.

About Sid Fleishman, it is not too much to say that his unique brand of humor has a subtlety and literary quality that compares favorably with Mark Twain. All of his books are entertaining, and if Fleishman's own children still prefer *By the Great Horn Spoon*, the 1966 *Chancy and the Grand Rascal* bids fair to take over (*14*). The books all have a kind of tall-tale humor that is, nevertheless, so rooted in reality that it becomes completely convincing. Don't miss these books when you and the children need pure fun and relaxation.

"The lonesome boy theme"

That perceptive Negro writer, Arna Bontemps, has referred to "the lonesome boy theme." It is a familiar one that not only runs through Bontemps' writing but dominates many children's books from *Heidi* to Taro Yashimo's *Crow Boy* (*39*). Loneliness means the need for love, to be wanted, to have a place in the world. It motivated Ester Weir's superb book *The Loner* (*38*) and two unusual books in 1966. The first one is Clyde Bulla's *White Bird* (*4*). The hero, John Thomas, was rescued from a flood when he was a baby and raised in complete isolation by his stern benefactor, Luke. Starved for love, the boy finds a rare white crow with a broken wing. By the time he has nursed it back to health, it is his pet on which he lavishes all his pent up love. Luke heartily disapproves and allows the bird to be taken away. So then John Thomas knows he hates Luke and must find his bird. The quest takes the boy into a world of people where, even though he discovers that his bird is dead, he encounters kindness, laughter, and affection. But when one man shows him how Luke must have loved and cherished him all these years, the boy knows he must return, not only because Luke needs his help now but sometime to bring Luke back to the world of people. The *White Bird* may, of course, be a symbol of the search for love, but it is also a good story and one of Bulla's most distinguished books.

Another book on this theme of the need for love and to bestow love is that powerful story by the Australian writer Reginald Ottley, *Boy Alone* (28). Boy is a "wood and water Joey" on one of those vast Australian cattle ranches that stretches for days of travel to that most terrible of all deserts, the Australian wilderness. The hard-working ranch people are good to the boy in an impersonal way; but when Kanga, the man who trains a pack of dogs to hunt the predators, puts a bitch and her very special pup in his care—even though Boy knows it is only temporary—he adores the two dogs, and they return his love. When Kanga takes the mother dog back to the pack and she dies of heartbreak, Boy thinks he will die, too. He feels he must save the pup, so he takes it and starts across the wilderness. Heat, thirst, and distance defeat them, and finally they just curl up together to wait for death. Kanga finds them and carries them back to the ranch, but both the boys and the man have learned something. Boy discovers that all the hard-working people on the ranch have cared about him, and the man has learned that a boy must have something of his own to cherish. He gives the pup to Boy. This is a more powerful story than any briefing of it can indicate. In the first chapter the confrontation with death is an unforgettable picture, but in the main, it is a story of the need to be loved and to bestow love.

In that fine historical story of the Civil War by Irene Hunt (16), *Across Five Aprils,* it was deep family love and the loyalty of friends that helped sustain young Jethro in his five years of backbreaking toil. And in Miss Hunt's Newbery Medal book for 1967, *Up a Long Road Slowly,* it is the protective love of an uncle and aunt that saved Julie from committing the ultimate folly and eventually turns her youthful intolerance and cruelty to compassion. For love has many faces which young people learn slowly. If to be loved and emotionally secure are the ultimate goals, along the way there are needs for pity, kindness, warmth, and everyday affection.

A change is a good thing

Not one of these books was written to teach a moral lesson, but they have all dealt honestly with a variety of social problems and faced the facts of life and death forthrightly. To digress briefly, recently Charlotte Huck and I have been quoted (*Horn Book*, April 1967) as sort of devil's advocates for didacticism, a recurring practice in writing for children that I have deplored these many years. Didacticism is writing for the express purpose of teaching a lesson about race relations or sharing or friendship or sundry other virtues already mentioned and thicker than hops today. But to line up on the side of compassion, courage, decency, and honest-dealing is not necessarily didacticism. Shakespeare was moral but hardly didactic, and such children's books as *Peter Rabbit*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Wind in the Willows*, the Wilder books, *The Hobbit*, and innumerable others are moral but not pedantic. Let's not confuse morality with didacticism, and let's be sure we can tell the difference.

Good and varied as modern realism is in children's books there comes a time when it helps to turn away from the mirror of our own conclusions and take a breather. This point is where fine fantasies can help children and send them back to their own perplexities clearer-eyed and better able to see the way.

Like poetry, many tales of magic have secondary meanings. Sometimes children catch these vaguely, and sometimes they miss them entirely but still enjoy the story. For instance, in Carol Kendall's (*19*) amusing *The Gammage Cup*, the Kingdom of the Minipins is in the throes of a rebellion against conformity—having to paint all their doors green. A few children may sense the satire on our own modern conformity—rows of houses all alike, shopping centers springing up all over the country, wall-to-wall carpeting, and the like—but if they miss the satire, they will still enjoy the action-packed story. Now sometimes allegory can be too subtle for children. Those exquisite fairy tales by the late poet Randall Jarrall (*17*), *The Bat Poet* and *The Animal Family*, only the rare, special child enjoys. For it should be said at this point that in no field of fiction do children's tastes differ as widely and as violently as in fantasy. One child laughs and rereads Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking* (*22*) again and again. Another can't stand the book. A fifth grader read all seven of C. S. Lewis' *Narnia* books (*20*), beginning with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, while other children could not get through the first book. We used to relegate J. R. R. Tolkien's

The Hobbit (35) to high school level; now sixth and even fifth graders read and reread it and join their older brothers in the Tolkien cult.

But two recent fantasies, year after year, hold unprecedented child appeal. They are, of course, *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White (36), and *The Borrowers* by Mary Norton (27). Charlotte evokes both laughter and tears, and the dialogue is so good it should be read aloud. *The Borrowers* compels the reader's complete identification with the Clock family, especially adventurous young Arriety, with a resultant anxiety that mounts steadily to the breathless conclusion. But these are virtues of any good plot story.

What are the special values of fantasy, and why is it so popular? The first reason is that with television and radio we have brought the anxieties and catastrophes of the whole world into our homes. In the morning, put on the coffee and turn on the gloom—newscasters intoning their rituals of doom. It is a dismal way to greet the morning, and we hope the children aren't paying attention. But a lot of it gets through, just the same. In contrast, the great fantasies give them a world of laughter and beauty. There may be an epic conflict between the forces of Good and Evil, but whether it is the noble Lion in the allegory of Narnia or the scared little hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, the evil is destroyed and the world is safe once more. There is in these books refuge from the complexities and sadness of the real world and so much warmth and reassurance that readers are comforted as well as entertained. These are the special virtues of the great fantasies.

In conclusion, there are many values in the many kinds of children's books, and most of them are the old values. But when we are searching for choice books for children, let's be flexible. Not every book a child reads needs to be a masterpiece. Think of our own hit-or-miss reading! But any book that makes a child feel more alive, more keenly aware of the worth and needs of other creatures, more eager to do things, ready to fall in love with life and eager to live it to the full—that is a good book for that child, and you are a lucky person if you are the one to put it into his hands.

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18. Johnson, Gerald. *America: A History For Peter,* 3 vols. beginning with "America Is Born." Morrow, 1959.
19. Kendall, Carol. *The Gammage Cup,* ill. by Eric Blegvad, Harcourt, 1959. *The Whisper of Glocken,* ill. by Imero Gabbato, Harcourt, 1965.
20. Lewis, C. S. The Narnia series beginning with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,* ill. by Pauline Baynes, Macmillan, 1950.
21. Lindgren, Astrid. *The Tomten,* ill. by Harald Wiberg, Coward, 1961. *The Tomten and the Fox,* Coward, 1965.
22. Lindgren, Astrid. *Pippi Longstocking,* ill. by Louis Glanzman, Viking, 1950.
23. McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal,* ill. by author, Viking, 1948.

One Morning in Maine, Viking, 1952. *Time of Wonder*. Viking, 1957.

24. McPherson, Margaret. *The Rough Road*, ill. by Douglas Hall, Harcourt, 1966.
25. Mead, Margaret. *People and Places*, World, 1959.
26. Ness, Evaline. *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine*, ill. by author, Holt, 1966. *Josefina February*, Scribner, 1963.
27. Norton, Mary. *The Borrowers*, ill. by Beth and Joe Krush, Harcourt, 1953. (Three more books in series.)
28. Ottley, Reginald. *Boy Alone*, ill. by Clyde Pearson, Harcourt, 1966.
29. Phipson, Joan. *The Boundary Riders*, ill. by Margaret Horder, Harcourt, 1963. *Family Conspiracy*, 1964. *Threat to the Barkers*, 1965. *Birkin*, 1966.
30. Renault, Mary. *The Lion At the Gateway*, ill. by Walter Hodges. Harper, 1964.
31. Rey, Margaret. *Curious George Goes to the Hospital*, ill. by Hans Rey. Harper, 1966.
32. Robertson, Keith. *Henry Reed's Baby-Sitting Service*, ill. by Robert McCloskey. Viking, 1966.
33. Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*, ill. by author, Harper, 1963 (Caldecott Medal).
34. Taylor, Mark. *Henry the Explorer*, ill. by Graham Booth. Atheneum, 1966.
35. Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Hobbit*, ill. by author. Houghton, 1938.
36. White, E. B. *Charlotte's Web*, ill. by Garth Williams, Harper, 1952.
37. White, Anne Terry. *The First Men in the World*. Random, 1963.
38. Wier, Ester. *The Loner*, ill. by Christine Price. McKay, 1963.
39. Yashima, Taro. *Crow Boy*, ill. by author. Viking, 1955.

How does one select suitable fare for eager readers? As **Sara Fenwick** states, 2,500 new books for children are published annually. The task, therefore, is immense. And the help given by this article is most welcome.

Selecting and Evaluating Materials for Recreational Reading

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FOR YEARS I resisted the term *recreational reading.* I was resisting the separation of the reading experience into two distinct patterns—one of study reading and one of recreational reading. While we recognize the validity of different purposes and motives, we deny the validity of describing the two processes in terms of situations, type of material, source of material, and time of day. The questions framed to differentiate one type of reading from another tend to be directed toward these factors: Is this classroom or library reading? Is this reading for school or home? Is the reading for study or pleasure? Are the materials from the school library or the public library? Not only is a false dichotomy created from the responses to these questions but a tendency to make value judgements about one purpose in reading as compared with another is fostered. Because there is no neat category of recreational reading books, or locations, it is important to identify and examine the purposes and the conditions to find out what we mean by recreational reading in order that we may bring some wisdom to the selection of worthwhile reading materials.

A measure of commitment by the selector is one of the essential ingredients of effective selection. This commitment combines a recognition that recreational reading is not something "to pass the time" or to be engaged in when the conditions are not favorable to outdoor sports or even to be encouraged in preference to too much television viewing; that the experiences, knowledge, and understandings to be gained in satisfying reading have validity in the development not only of the mature reader but of the mature man; and that these experiences are the rewards for the mastery of the reading skills. The decisions concerning materials, then, are not merely in terms of choosing the cheapest and brightest and handiest from the vast array of materials available today; choices are made with a conviction that it does matter what children read and that careful, thoughtful selection is the first step in reading guidance. Lacking such commitment, book selection may as well be done, as happens too often, by ordering from the nearest wholesale book dealer X hundreds or thousands of dollars worth of books.

I find significance in the root meaning of *re-create*—to make new, to cause to grow. As a describer of reading it would seem to call for experiences that would create wonder and foster imagination; encourage curiosity while asking and answering questions; and introduce new ideas, new people, and new places with new words and new uses for old words. Thus, we might put fresh life into reading, into learning, into living.

The goals of the adult for the child would be directed toward extending the boundaries of his particular world, deepening his understanding of himself and his environment, and setting up conditions that would favor a satisfying transaction between reader and book. On the other hand, the goals of the adult may be strictly instrumental—to keep the child quiet, to provide practice in reading skills, to foster a favorable attitude toward the activity of reading, and to satisfy a desire to see the child engaged in an intellectual activity.

Let us also examine the goals of the child in engaging in what we would call recreational reading. These may include seeking to satisfy a curiosity stimulated in classroom discussion—such as, asking what happened to Columbus when he returned to Spain after his first voyage, finding out how to build a soapbox racer, reading the comic that one's friends were talking about, pursuing another story as good as Kate Seredy's *The Good Master* (40), or merely passing the time between homework and dinner by some other means than television. These purposes do not represent different children. They may be characteristic of the reading behavior of the same child at different times. And they are not necessarily all recreational reading.

As adults we tend to describe much of our recreational reading as "escape" reading and to think of it as specifically escape from pressures of daily routines and responsibilities. Children, too, read for escape, but usually they read to satisfy a basic need to stretch out of their surroundings and out of themselves. It is a need to experience laughter, surprise, or beauty. Such experiences fit our definition of recreation.

The child's reading that corresponds to the adult's reading merely to pass the time is not really recreational. It should not be lightly dismissed, however. Some observations can be made about this reading. Does the reader pick up a book for a brief bit of reading because he finds the activity of reading pleasurable, because he sees other members of his family enjoying it, because books are easily accessible, because he was advised to be quiet, or because reading is a last resort?

These moments for reading—sometimes at home and often at school—can be enhanced by preplanning and selection of materials to fit the unscheduled pauses in the otherwise tightly scheduled calendar. Certain kinds of books should always be at hand in the home or within arm's reach at school: a book of poetry or verse, such as, *Johnny Crow's Garden* (1), *Silver Pennies* (2), or *Imagination's Other Place* (3); or distinguished picture books, such as *This is London* (4) or *The Rich Man and the Shoemaker* (5). Other types of worthwhile browsing materials might include books that are storehouses of fascinating information presented in attractive format, such as *Wonders of Life on Earth* (6) or *The Holy Land and the Time of Jesus* (7); that are hilarious and timeless fun, as *Horton Hatches the Egg* (8), *The Fast Sooner Hound* (9), or *1066 and All That* (10). These books should not be permanent fixtures but should be changed frequently, and they should be always inviting.

For the reading needs that are characterized in part by short, broken time periods, another type of material that should be available and accessible is the periodical. There are few magazines of general interest and real worth being published today specifically for the child in upper elementary grades. All polls of magazine reading preferences for fifth and sixth grade children, consequently, rate the popular adult magazines as top favorites: *Life, Sports Illustrated, Time, Popular Mechanics, New Yorker* and *Newsweek.* On the other hand, perhaps these and similar magazines are useful ports of entry to the whole world of adult concerns and adult writing. For the younger readers there are a few children's magazines: *Jack and Jill, Children's Digest, Highlights for Children*, and *Nature and Science*.

Magazines should be approved reading matter and easily accessible to children in schools at any time, not just lunch hour. We have been guilty of putting a premium upon the reading of the book as opposed to reading equally good periodicals, when we should have been teaching young children to use magazines effectively.

When we talk of evaluation and selection, we are literally talking of two processes. Evaluation has to do with the assessment of the quality of the book in terms of established criteria; selection describes our choices from among materials already evaluated and judged worthy or useful. Obviously, evaluation ought to precede selection—not to catalog all materials into two classes, good and poor, but to make a judgment about the significance of theme or subject, the quality of workmanship (language, style, characterization, plot, originality, clarity, accuracy), and the appropriateness of the ideas presented. Having identified those materials that have qualities that will make possible satisfactory reading experiences, the process of selection is one of choices in terms of the consumers' individual or group characteristics. The evaluation of a book is modified in time only by changing mores, values, and goals of a society, as witness *Black Beauty* (*11*) and *Little Men* (*12*); but the process of selection must be always contemporary. Books are selected for this group, this child, or this reading experience, in this year or week or day. This is one of the values of a central library collection in every elementary school from which classroom libraries may flow for any desired period of time. This year's class is not last year's; their most absorbing interests are not the same; their abilities are likely to present a different pattern; and their responses to their environment are bound to be changing because their worlds, immediate and remote, are far from stable. It is evident that these two processes, which supplement each other in the provision of materials for recreational reading, require the exercise of different skills and draw upon several areas of background knowledge.

Ideally, of course, books should be evaluated by critical reading. With an annual publication of new children's books that total approximately 2500, such individual evaluation is impossible. The next best substitute is the critical review in which books are not merely described but evaluated for quality, appeal and usefulness. Perhaps one of the most important skills of the book selector today is the ability to make constructive and effective use of book reviews. It may be of help to identify a few of the more general sources of help for the selector of trade books.

These sources include, first of all, journals devoted wholly or in part to the reviewing of current children's books. Most useful among these, because of the authority of experienced reviewers, teachers, and librarians involved in their production, are *The Booklist and Subscription Books Bulletin*, published twice a month by the American Library Association; *The Horn Book Magazine*, published bimonthly by Horn Book, Inc., in Boston; *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, published monthly by the University of Chicago; and the monthly section on children's books in the *Saturday Review*.

A second type of aid is the major booklist, most useful for building basic collections in schools and libraries. The *Children's Catalog*, from H. W. Wilson Co. listing over 3000 titles and kept up-to-date by new editions and supplements, is the best known of these tools.

General booklists that are much less comprehensive but are especially useful as desk lists for the teacher or librarian in choosing reading material for individual readers as well as for library collections include: *Children's Books Too Good to Miss*, compiled by May Hill Arbuthnot, Margaret Mary Clark, and Harriet Geneva Long and published by Western Reserve University (1966); *Let's Read Together*, published by the American Library Association (1964); *Books For the Teen-Age, 1967*, published by The New York Public Library; *Good Books For Children*, compiled by Mary K. Eakin and published by The University of Chicago Press (1967).

With these enumerated sources for help in evaluation to make the first sorting for appropriate materials, we can turn our attention to the aspect of the problem that is our major responsibility: that of selection, whether for an individual or for a group.

Because the recreational reading experience is so personal a transaction, it is important to try to identify some of the factors that operate in the child's free choice selections for reading. There are many such factors that we cannot recognize, but we can speculate about a few, based upon observation, objective evidence, and knowledge of child development.

The pressure of time in the closely scheduled days that most of our children live dictates, for many readers, something that is short, capable of being completed in one sitting, and preferably plentifully illustrated. The informational books that are patently browsing books, seldom treating a subject in depth or sufficiently well organized to be useful as reference books, have some usefulness here although it is well that we recognize their relatively ephemeral value. They seldom engage the interest of the reader to the point where he will read even the brief text included, and even less likely is he to use this experience as a departure point for the pursuit of new areas of knowledge or hobbies.

The factor of familiarity certainly operates in children's choices. When confronted with a collection of books to which he has no guide or introduction, the casual reader will invariably select a book read previously, or a book by a recognized author or publisher. Here is one of the great sources of appeal of the innumerable series. In both types of selection accessibility is also a factor. I listened to a series of interviews with ten- and eleven-year-old children who were able but not enthusiastic readers, as they described their voluntary reading, and was particularly impressed by the recurring reference to home reading time that was spent in rereading whatever old favorite happened to be at hand. One girl always read one of the Betsy-Tacy series that she had owned for several years. There was nothing wrong in this activity; it did suggest, however, the failure of adults in the child's life not only to make more choices as easily available but to bridge the gap of the unknown author, title, and format. There must come a time of diminishing returns on the old favorite, especially when it is outgrown and when nothing new is being put in its place. One of the obvious needs is to plan for various ways to introduce new books in a variety of ways: by reading aloud, by book-sharing periods, by identifying appeals in the favorite book—appeals not necessarily of subject or author or time, but of theme, emotional tone, or style.

Materials selected by the reader for recreational purposes are likely to be at a level of difficulty below the level at which the reader tests. Such materials should always be available for choice so that the satisfaction of success is insured and the goals of recreation are not defeated.

On the other hand, if the reader is given free opportunity to select material and has sufficient variety from which to choose, the interest factor is likely to be more important than the precise readability level. Studies indicate that children will read materials of two and more grades above their test level if they are highly motivated to want to pursue the story or subject.

The important principle to be recognized here is that a range of difficulty as well as subject and form should be available for recreation choices, since different factors in the reader's environment as well as in his physical and emotional development may be operating at different times.

A rich collection of recreational reading materials will span all interests, developmental, environmental, and curriculum oriented. There is no one type of reading matter or subject field that can be identified as more useful than others for reading that is essentially recreational, nor is there any particular merit to be attached to the reading of one type of material as compared to another. There has been a considerable amount of writing among popular and professional commentators on children's literature expressing concern over the increasing percentage of publishing and reading that is occupied with informational books. That this fact is true is not surprising when one considers the very great increase in the publishing of informational books, covering a range of the whole field of man's knowledge; and many of them written with skill and imagination.

That any child's reading should include experience with many kinds of literature is recognized, but does not mean that at any one time there is any more value in reading imaginative writing than informational. In other words, recreational reading is not synonymous with fiction. It would be more realistic to recognize that the reading of *The Remarkable Dolphin and What Makes Him So* (*13*) may be as productive of enriching experience as would be *Wind in the Willows* (*14*).

It is to be hoped that both books, and many others like them, will be in a child's total reading life.

There are some special needs to be provided for.

For the beginning readers we seek books with an interest-holding continuity of action and a natural use of dialogue, while assuring reading success for these first essays at independent reading with a vocabulary that can be handled: *Danny and the Dinosaur* (*15*), *Little Bear* (*16*), and *Tony's Birds* (*17*). One useful aid in the selection of similar titles is "I Can Read It Myself," compiled by Frieda Heller and published by Ohio State University, College of Education (*1965*).

Books for the science-minded readers—and interest inventories indicate that science is one of the first choices, even of first and second grade children—pose special problems in selection. A special bibliography prepared for this purpose is *The Science Booklist for Children*, compiled by Hilary Deason and published by the AAAS and National Science Foundation (1963). Critical reviewing of current materials is provided in *Science Books*: A Quarterly Review, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and once a year in *Natural History* and *Scientific American*.

For the reader who has learned to read but who needs to consolidate his skills and who is making that important transition from books with a controlled vocabulary to a continuous story of book length, we look for books that are unforbidding in heavy concentration of type, well and copiously illustrated, and, most importantly, of absorbing interest in plot when fictitious or of relevant fact in content when informational. The children who become the reluctant readers, never finding reading a satisfying activity, are probably more often lost at the time of this transition than at any other stage of their development. Because this is true, the selection of books for these children is the most difficult of our selection problems.

The discrepancy between the everday adventures of young children and the daydreams nourished in the supernatural achievements of heroes of comic books and television serials is unusually great at this age. An essential ingredient, therefore, for stories to have the same appeal is action developed with suspense. Involved in the action should be a hero—a believable one. Humor is a useful ingredient, especially for the eight- and nine-year-old. The simple and childlike mystery stories of Felice Holman are useful for these readers, *Elizabeth and the Marsh Mystery* (*18*) being one of the recent ones. Also useful are Clyde Bulla's *Ghost Town Treasure* (*19*) and *Benito* (*20*).

A third transitional stage that is a product of a developmental stage in reading occurs at the preadolescent stage when the able reader may approach teacher or librarian with the request, "How about a book written for adults; I have read all the kid's books"; or "I am bored with stories about teen-age girls; what can I read now?" A process of selection is needed at this time that draws upon two sources:

1. the most challenging of the writing for young people—historical fiction such as the stories of Rosemary Sutcliff; biographies such as *So Young a Queen* (*21*), *Houdini, Master of Escape* (*22*), and *They Showed The Way* (*23*); realistic stories of young people facing the significant problems of today's world such as *Lions in the Way* (*24*); and problems in family relationships such as *Queenie Peavey* (*25*); and
2. the writing for adults that have something important to say to young people about life such as *Diary of a Young Girl* (*26*) by Anne Frank.

The selections for these readers must, almost without exception, be made from the teacher's or librarian's experience. They are an individual prescription of reading guidance, and the time is so important that we cannot afford too many mistakes. We can find "bridges" to further reading at all levels from our own experience. An enthusiastic recommendation from an adult is more likely to be successful than any number of printed lists. There are some printed lists, however, that are useful for adults in suggesting and recalling memorable titles. These include *Book Bait*, published by the American Library Association, and *Books*

For the Teen Age, an annual publication of the New York Public Library.

There is a noticeably strong tide of realism running through the publications in the children's book field today. In the past three years we have welcomed *Harriet the Spy* (27), *It's Like This, Cat* (28), *Up a Road Slowly* (29), and a number of others—stories in which the realism is not only one of time and place and interesting dialogue but also of character protrayals in which the protagonists grapple with problems that are important and real to this age level and which involve decisions that contribute to the development of a personal identity and a code of values by which to live.

We have been interested to see that not only have these and many other titles concerned themselves with themes of current relevance to youth but that a surprisingly large number are told in first person, sometimes as an interior monologue, a style that would have been considered to be an obstacle for children a few years ago. In the hands of today's writers the style serves to increase the realistic impact. These books are providing us with more effective tools to reach the reluctant reader who has had little success in finding reading experiences that have any relationship to his everyday problems.

Some of these books have been controversial in that they are recognized to be well written but have appealed in quite different degrees to adults and children. For example, Harriet has been recognized by the fifth and sixth grade girls as speaking directly to them; adults have been uneasy about her because they are not sure that readers will see her activities of spying upon parents and neighbors as being a violation of privacy.

In recent years we have attempted to bring another focus to bear on the selection of reading materials: that of the degree of culture binding which seems to characterize the material. With little experience to guide us we have observed and experimented to find a few types of writing that seem to have appeal with a minimum of cultural demands. The universal psychological appeal of *Where the Wild Things Are* (30) gave us the clue that the emotional appeal of the rebellions, and needs for security common to all children are more important in the reader's identification with the fictional characters and events than the physical settings. At the same time we have welcomed more books with an urban setting and about families who are contending with poverty and broken homes as in *Noonday Friends* (31), *Wigwam in the City* (32), *Project Cat* (33), and *Tomas Takes Charge* (34). We are reminded, in considering this factor, that books about science for both younger and older children are probably the least culture bound of any type of writing.

During the course of this paper I have referred to a few tools that should be useful in the process of book selection. Most of us also need some guides for the evaluation of materials. There is no neat and tidy checklist that can be used as a measure of significance, or quality, or appropriateness. The most important skills that we bring to this process are those developed in the reading and interpreting of adult books, and not only adult writings but also adult films. Our own background experience needs constant nourishment in order to grow, to be tuned to the sounds of the time. There are many writings on literature, both adult and children's, that are worth rereading from time to time. They include Paul Hazard's *Books, Children and Men (35),* Lillian Smith's *The Unreluctant Years* (36), Edward Rosenheim's *What Happens in Literature* (37), Chukovskii's *From Two to Five* (38), and Quiller-Couch's *on the Art of Reading* (39).

In the final analysis, the evaluation and selection of books for recreational reading are continuous processes. We can add to our knowledge and skills with each critical review or commentary on children's books we read and with every discussion of a book with a child reader. Critics in many fields have turned their attention recently to children's literature. This condition cannot help but result in a livelier climate for the writing, publishing, and reading of better books.

SUGGESTED READING

1. Brooke, L. Leslie. *Johnny Crow's Garden.* New York: Frederick Warne & Co., 1903.
2. Thompson, Blanche J. *Silver Pennies.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1938.
3. Plotz, Helen. *Imagination's Other Place.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1955.

4. Sasek, Miroslav. *This is London.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1959.
5. LaFontaine, Jean de. *Rich Man and the Shoemaker.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1966.
6. Life Magazine. *Wonders of Life on Earth.* New York: Golden Press, 1961.
7. Kotker, Norman. *The Holy Land and the Time of Jesus.* (A Horizon Caravel Book.) New York: Harber & Row, 1967.
8. Seuss, Dr. *Horton Hatches the Egg.* New York: Random House, Inc., 1940.
9. Bontemps, Arna. *The Fast Sooner Hound.* New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1942.
10. Sellar, Walter C. and Robert J. Yeatman. *1066 And All That.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1931.
11. Sewell, Anna. *Black Beauty.* Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. (1877).
12. Alcott, Louisa May. *Little Men.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co. (1871).
13. Chapin, Henry. *The Remarkable Dolphin and What Makes Him So.* New York: William R. Scott, Inc., 1962.
14. Grahame, Kenneth. *Wind in the Willows.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (1908).
15. Hoff, Syd. *Danny and the Dinosaur.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1958.
16. Minarik, Else H. *Little Bear.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1961.
17. Selsam, Millicent. *Tony's Birds.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1961.
18. Holman, Felice. *Elizabeth and the Marsh Mystery.* New York: Macmillan Co., 1966.
19. Bulla, Clyde R. *Ghost Town Treasure.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1958.
20. Bulla, Clyde R. *Benito.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1961.
21. Mills, Lois. *So Young a Queen.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1961. (Jadgwiga of Poland)
22. Stoutenburg, Adrien. *Houdini, Master of Escape.* Philadelphia: Macrae Smith Co., 1960.
23. Rollins, Charlemae Hill. *They Showed the Way.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1964.
24. Rodman, Bella. *Lions in the Way.* Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1966.
25. Burch, Robert. *Queenie Peavey.* New York: Viking Press, 1966.
26. Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl.* New York: Doubleday & Co. (1947)
27. Fitzhugh, Louise. *Harriet the Spy.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1964.

28. Neville, Emily C. *It's Like This, Cat.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1963.
29. Hunt, Irene. *Up a Road Slowly.* Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1966.
30. Sendak, Maurice. *Where The Wild Things Are.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1963.
31. Stolz, Mary S. *Noonday Friends.* New York: Harper & Bros., 1965.
32. Smucker, Barbara C. *Wigwam in the City.* New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1966.
33. Burchardt, Nellie. *Project Cat.* New York: Franklin Watts, 1966.
34. Talbot, Charlene J. *Tomas Takes Charge.* New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1966.
35. Hazard, Paul. *Books, Children and Men.* Boston: Horn Book, 1947.
36. Smith, Lillian H. *The Unreluctant Years;* A Critical Approach to Children's Literature. Chicago: American Library Association, 1954.
37. Rosenheim, Edward W., Jr. *What Happens in Literature.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.
38. Chukovskii, Kornei. *From Two to Five.* Berkeley: University of Calif. Press, 1963.
39. Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur T. *On the Art of Reading.* New York: Putnam's Sons, 1920.
40. Seredy, Kate. *The Good Master.* New York: Viking Press, 1935.

A practical program for developing discriminating readers must not sacrifice appreciation. DR. HUCK here gives strong evidence that such a program is possible and, further, that critical reading, deftly taught, can *enhance* appreciation.

Reading Literature Critically

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READING LITERATURE critically does not mean teaching six- or ten-year-olds to become literary critics; neither does it mean demanding detailed analysis of every book read; nor does it require group dissection of a prescribed list of "great books." It *does* mean helping children become discriminating, appreciative readers who recognize and value fine writing. It means developing readers who are increasingly aware of both what is said and how and why the author said it in just that way. The ultimate experience of a story or a poem lies in the way it is told, not in just the facts or events it relates.

From Seuss to Shakespeare

We have given little attention in the elementary school to this type of reading—call it appreciative reading, reading in depth, or critical reading. Preoccupied with the great issues of *when* to begin teaching reading and *what methods* to use, we have tended to neglect the higher level skills of critical thinking and evaluation of what is read. When we have considered critical reading, we have focused upon such narrow aspects as teaching the identification of propaganda techniques or comparing the factual presentation of two accounts of the Civil War. We have seldom considered reading literature critically in the elementary school. Literature, we said, was for enjoyment and recreation. Some believed that increased knowledge of the discipline could only lead to an early dislike. If we wanted a horrible example of what happened to literature when it was taught as literature, we had only to recall our high school experience with *Silas Marner*. It was a far, far better thing that we did when we put literature on the top shelves of our cupboards and allowed children to keep

Nancy Drew and *The Happy Hollisters* in their desks for recreational reading. That way children went from Seuss to Shakespeare with little literary instruction in between.

Literature as a discipline

But then Bruner postulated his now famous statement that every subject can be taught to any child in some acceptable form. Concepts of geometry and physics were introduced to second graders. Youngsters of all ages began to learn foreign languages. Yet the place of teaching literature in the elementary school was still held to be sacred, inviolate, and neglected. In Pooley's study of the teaching of literature in Wisconsin, he reported that primary children were exposed to some literature in the story hour but that middle-grade children received no instruction in reading literature *whatsoever*. Slowly, the defenses of those who would keep literature a thing of beauty to be enjoyed but not understood crumbled. The individualized reading movement showed that children would read and enjoy good literature when it was introduced to them. Basic reading programs began to provide poetry, selections from literature, and full-length books for children's reading instruction. Research by Suchman and Torrance suggested that children could be taught to think critically and creatively. Certainly this ability could be applied to the reading of literature.

Children's literature is a part of the mainstream of our literary heritage. Think of the number of literary allusions that have their derivation in the literature of childhood:

A matter of sour grapes
The boy who cried wolf
He has a Midas touch
Turns into a pumpkin at midnight
Whitewash your fence
One of the serendipities of the trip

Literature is built upon literature. *Belling the Tiger*, by Mary Stolz, for example, is based upon the old fable of "Belling the Cat." Appreciation for Marianne Moore's poem "The Fox and the Grapes" depends upon the reader's knowledge of the usual ending to this fable. The spiral curriculum begins with literature in the kindergarten.

The study of literature

Bruner also tells us that every discipline has its own characteristic mode of inquiry. How then do we help children get "inside" the structure of literature and learn how to read it critically? There are many different approaches that have been suggested for the study of literature in the elementary grades including those utilized by Olson and Hedges for the Nebraska Study. At Ohio State, we are just completing a three-year study of "The Critical Reading Ability of Elementary School Children."* Working with 654 students in grades 1-6, we developed lessons, prepared tests, and instructed teachers to guide children in the critical reading of both nonfiction and fiction. There is not time to give the results of this study, and the final report will be sent to the U. S. Office of Education by June 1, 1967. I will, however, present the framework we used for teaching children to read literature critically and describe some of the lessons. First, we found that in order to evaluate literature thoughtfully, children had to know the various types of literature, for criteria vary with different genre. Second, in order to judge literature effectively, children had to know the components of good writing; and third, some attention was given to the use of literary devices that might enhance or detract from the writing.

The identification and evaluation of various types of literature

For years we have emphasized the necessity of knowing the different thought processes required for reading in the content fields. We've taught children to be aware of the pattern of scientific thinking needed to read science materials, while we emphasized chronological and cause and effect relationships when reading history. These same differences abound in reading different types of fiction. Differences of opinion may arise from lack of agreement about the particular form of literature that is being used, and as a result, a different set of criteria may be applied. For example, many reviewers identified *Dorp Dead* as a piece of realistic writing that was too grim for most children. They criticized it on the basis of its inconsistency with life. Gilly Ground, the orphan, seemed too knowledgeable for his age; Kobalt, the man who adopted him, was too sinister; Gilly's plan of escape was impossible—no ladder could fit up a chimney. Viewed, however, from the point of view of an allegory, *Dorp Dead* becomes an exceptional book. Kobalt *is* evil, for his is the epitome of all the evil in mankind; Gilly Ground represents youth caught between its need to be nonconforming and its need for security. The Hunter may be the love or the meaning of life for which we are all searching. Taken in this context, it really doesn't matter whether a ladder would fit up a chimney; the significant fact is that Gilly escaped from evil by his own volition and planning! The million other Gilly Grounds in the world today may escape their particular horrors in the same way.

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*"The Critical Reading Ability of Elementary School Children," Cooperative Research Project #2612, U. S. Office of Education. Principal Investigators: Charlotte S. Huck, Martha L. King, Willavene Wolf. The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

The first step in critical reading of literature, then, is simply identification of form. How do you tell fiction from nonfiction, for example? Working with second graders, we compared McCloskey's *Make Way for Ducklings* with Goldin's *Ducks Don't Get Wet*. The children noted that there were facts in both of them, but the authors used these facts in different ways. McCloskey's book told a story; Goldin's book did not have a plot. And in McCloskey's book, the ducks talk and act like people, whereas Goldin's book has no imaginary elements.

Younger children then compared stories that could be true with those that couldn't possibly happen. Second graders heard Aileen Fisher's lovely poetic story of *Listen, Rabbit*. In this picture book, a boy who longs for a pet follows a rabbit throughout the year, hoping to make friends with him. He never succeeds, but he does find her nest and knows that he shall have the pleasure of watching four baby rabbits grow up. Everything in this book is true to nature and could happen. *Amigo* by Byrd Schweitzer has a similar theme. Francisco, a Mexican boy, wishes for a pet, but his family could never afford one. Much to his family's amusement, he decides to tame a prairie dog. At the same time, a young prairie dog sets out to tame a boy, despite his family's laughter. While both books are fiction, the second graders could identify the fanciful element in *Amigo* and even noted the place where the fanciful was first introduced.

According to the background of experience and the maturity of the group, children were given instruction in identifying further subdivisions in realistic and fanciful materials. They learned to identify the forms of folk tales, fables, myths, and modern fantasy. Depending upon the setting of time, they found that realistic fiction might be contemporary or historical. Biography had to be differentiated from historical fiction and autobiography. Mere identification of form, however, does not make a critical reader of literature, although it is a necessary first step.

Establishing criteria for the components of fiction

After identifying the form of the writing, children then had to be helped to establish criteria for what constitutes fine writing. The components of good writing of fiction usually include: 1) a well-constructed plot, 2) convincing characterization, 3) significant theme, and 4) appropriate style. Materials had to be analyzed and evaluated against these criteria. Primary children studied the accumulative plots of "The House That Jack Built" and some of the Dr. Seuss stories. They looked at the parallel plot construction of *Blueberries for Sal* or the repetitive action of the folk tale in which everything happens in triplicate. Children learned to distinguish between excellent character delineation such as seen in *Madeline* or *Henry Reed, Inc.* and fine character development as exemplified by *Crow Boy* or Barbara Picard's superb new book for older students, *One Is One*. Using the paperback edition of *Call It Courage* by Armstrong Sperry, six fifth-graders read the first chapter and then listed the various ways in which the author revealed the character of Mafatu. Their list included 1) learning what the older tribesmen thought of Mafatu, 2) learning what his peers thought of him, 3) learning what Mafatu thought of himself and his all-consuming fear of the sea, 4) hearing what others said about him, 5) hearing what he said to others, and 6) seeing him in action as he decides to conquer his fear of the sea and begin his long voyage. Then these students wrote their own stories in which they attempted to describe a character in several different ways. When first graders were first asked about the "big ideas" or the theme of the story, they frequently responded with the details of the plot. Only when they compared books that had a similar theme such as *Dandelion* with *Harry, the Dirty Dog* or *The Rabbit That Wanted Red Wings*, did they realize that very different stories could still have the same theme. All these tales are stories of dissatisfied animals who try to be something besides themselves; only when they are true to their own natures, do they find happiness.

Use of literary devices

Just as children learned to identify and evaluate the use of persuasive words in advertisements and editorials, so too did they learn to evaluate the use of such literary devices as point of view, flashback, and symbols. Younger children tried telling well-known stories from different points of view. For example they told the story of "The Three Bears" as Goldilocks might have had to tell her mother when she returned home or as the littlest bear might have told it in sharing period the next day at school! Children in the middle grades evaluated the effectiveness of the first-person narrative of *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. They compared the shift in the point of view in the poem "Abraham Lincoln" by the Benets. In the first verses, Lincoln is discussed by his contemporaries who did not recognize his greatness when it lived among them. The last verse is written from the point of view of the poet today who maintained that "Lincoln was the green pine / Lincoln kept on growing." These children also understood the metaphor of the green pine. The symbolism of the road, the best dishes, and the very title of *The Cabin That Faced West* were discussed. De Jong's consistent use of a broom to represent the fears of the little lost dog in *Hurry Home, Candy* was not beyond their level of understanding. The children were never told that *this* is a symbol, but they were gradually led to discover the deeper meanings of such recurring objects, expressions, places, or events. Even young children recognized the significance of the implied meaning at the end of *Where the Wild Things Are* by Sendak. Max had been punished and sent to his room without his supper. He fantasies an island of wild monsters where he becomes the king and orders all the wild things to bed without *their* suppers. When he grows tired of his island, he returns home to find his supper waiting for him—and it was still hot. Most children know that his mother brought it to him and that it represented the feelings of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Evaluation

These, then, are some of the skills of reading literature critically that we taught. Test results showed conclusively that children from grades one through six can learn to read literature critically. Did we destroy literature for the children? Quite the opposite—for the more students learned about literature, the greater was their appreciation and enthusiasm! Teachers were warned, however, that enjoyment was the first prerequisite. That they were successful in this approach is revealed by the statement made by one third grader who said that "Last year my favorite subject was lunch, but this year it's learning about different kinds of books like fantasy, realistic books, and informal ones like *All About Spiders*." He may not have learned the term "informational," but he could give a correct example and his enthusiasm was obvious.

TECHNIQUES AND TYPES

Seldom has the case for reading to children been more forcefully presented than in the following discussion. Teachers will also find some practical guidelines for making their presentations meaningful.

Let Them Listen

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LAST WEEK I had a visit from a recently graduated student of ours who is doing her first semester of teaching. This young lady was distressed to the point of seriously considering giving up teaching. She was having the expected first-year problems with discipline and time allotment, but the reason for her visit to me was not because she lacked the skill to overcome these temporary setbacks but because she was upset and confused by something that her principal had said to her. This beginning teacher was called into her principal's office to discuss some problems. The discussion began with the principal's saying to the teacher, "I have been worried about you ever since I learned that you *read* to your class for twenty minutes every day. Don't you have any better way to spend your time? Aren't there more important things you should be doing with your class?" The distraught young teacher explained that she had been taught (by me, incidentally) that oral reading was a legitimate teaching procedure for second grade, and to which her principal replied, "Don't pay any attention to what they told you in college; most of those things don't work anyway. Certainly no *good* experienced teacher wastes twenty minutes a day reading to a class." Is this principal correct? Is it the lazy or poorly trained, disinterested or uninformed teacher who reads to the class?

I would like to present to you a case *in favor* of allowing your children to listen to literature read to them in the classroom. After serious consideration I hope that you will agree with me and authorities in the field of education and children's literature who support oral reading and storytelling as a worthwhile procedure which is worthy of class time.

There are three kinds of teachers: Those we forget, those we forgive, and those we remember. If you will return with me to your early school career, perhaps you will remember as I do a teacher standing by her desk or comfortably seated reading another chapter from a much loved book. I can visualize several such teachers, and these are among the teachers that I remember. One could almost feel the air charged with class (and teacher) enthusiasm while the pupils silently begged for another chapter to be read—infringing upon the time meant for a geography lesson. Perhaps you remember the satisfaction of seeing the book in an important position on the desk and recall the mixed emotions of sadness and anticipation when the bookmark was almost to the end of *Caddie Woodlawn*.

If you are worth your salt, you are now saying, "The aim of a good teacher is hardly just to be remembered. Futhermore, those were the good old days when the demands upon the teacher and student were not nearly so great." Both of these conclusions are, I think, accurate. However, maybe you are thinking, "If I have five minutes to spare before lunch, I sometimes read a poem, but as a general rule I can't waste that much time." It is the implication of those last statements that I hope to disprove. The statements imply that reading to a room full of children is an extra frill only to be undertaken by the terribly well-organized teacher who is able to get really important work done in less than the allotted time or the lazy and indulgent who waste away precious teaching hours with trivia. Perhaps you are saying, "When my class is good, I read to them," or "If they are particularly quiet, they get a story on Friday afternoon," or "Everyone who has finished his day's work can listen to a story record." These thoughts suggest that reading literature to our children is a reward for good behavior, a prize for academic achievement, or a "blue-ribbon-in-sound."

Either of these implications—that reading is a frill, an extra for leftover time, or that reading is a reward for good behavior or academic achievement—is easily sensed by the children. If the teacher has the impression that oral reading is not really very important, then the child's reaction is "Why should I listen? Literature isn't really very important." This is very logical reasoning on the student's part. It is very possible that the child's negative reaction to listening to literature will lead him to the conclusion that reading is not very important either. We know that the reverse is true: the child who *is* read to tends to read more. Could we not assume that the child who is *not* read to and is taught that being read to is unimportant tends to read less?

Many of our students have experienced precious little oral reading. Even fewer have listened to really great literature, and probably none has heard drama read. If they are to hear literature, then, they must hear it from you. If they are to experience the benefits of listening to great literature, they will experience them because you thought oral reading important.

Why should I read to my class?

What is to be gained from reading to a class? There are at least four reasons, any *one* of which is justification for the regular inclusion of oral reading in the classroom.

First, there is enjoyment. If your students learn that literature is a source of pleasure and happiness, this knowledge will carry over to their adult lives. The sheer pleasure derived from listening to a story or a poem read by a teacher who obviously thoroughly enjoyed it is justification enough to read to our pupils Laura E. Richards' "Eletelephony," *Mr. Popper's Penguins,* or *Rain Makes Apple Sauce.* It is difficult to know where to stop when listing literature that is "long" on enjoyment.

Second, there are valuable ethical lessons to be gained from the literature that is available today—not the superficial moralism in the McGuffy readers or even the pointed morals in Aesop's Fables but the better understanding gained about ourselves and others which is internalized from the literature teachers share with students. Frank Bonham's *Durango Street,* recently awarded a "Recognition of Merit" by the Claremont Reading Conference, is a realistic book on teen-age gangs and would be most appropriate for oral reading to an older group. The old familiar *All American* or *Thee, Hannah!* speak out on current minority group problems in a way that can be felt by the listener. There are almost limitless selections in the category of self-understanding and human relationships. A number of suggested lists are available in this field.

A third value is the acquisition of academic learning. There are gains to be made in language arts and in all academic areas through oral presentations of literature. Our language is actually an oral one. Students who have never had the opportunity to listen to the spoken language are less likely to develop an ear for its beauty. In the *English Journal*, January, 1966, Edmund Farrell stresses that the act of reading literature is the act of silently speaking the printed page. "Such a subtle concept as tone in writing could never be taught unless one were first trained to hear and discriminate among the sounds of the written language." We know that gains made in any area of the language arts reflect as improvement in all of the language areas. Marjorie Smiley in the April, 1965, *English Journal* stresses the particularly great problem the underprivileged child faces in learning to read. She refers to the research showing a high relationship between reading and auditing and concludes that we do not do nearly enough reading aloud to our elementary and secondary students or make enough use of the rich store of records of poetry, stories, speeches, and plays. However, not only will the child benefit in reading and related language ability, but will gain in all academic areas through selections read aloud. A study of World War I is given depth by the reading of *Gay-Neck*. *Nine Days to Christmas* is perfect with a unit on Mexico. *Eskimo Boy*, a strong children's novel, will give your class an understanding of Alaska that an organization of facts about the North can not touch. By reading these books to your children, you keep an "eye check" on them for understanding so that an explanation can follow confused looks, a task you cannot do if the book has been assigned for silent reading.

A fourth reason for reading to your children, and perhaps the most important one, is the aesthetic growth gained by losing one's self in the excitement of prose, the beauty of poetry, or the fascination of drama. The enthralling escape provided in *Treasure Island*, the creative greatness of characterization found in *Rabbit Hill*, and the quiet beauty of words in Siddie Jo Johnson's new book of poetry *Feather in My Hand* are invaluable in this day when we are bombarded with the mediocre and even the shoddy. This last value, helping children learn to discriminate and appreciate aesthetic beauty by listening, makes oral reading worth a prominent place in the hierarchy of important subjects which deserve school time. For any or all of these four reasons, the reading of literature to your students is educationally defensible.

How can I help my students to listen appreciatively?

How can you as a teacher prepare your students to appreciate listening to literature? There are at least four responsibilities that you must accept.

Your first responsibility is that of setting the stage for listening and then following through after the selection is shared. There will be times, of course, when the preparation is already there and all you need to do is to be familiar with the proper selection. For example, the first snow of the year would provide ample preparation for *The Snowy Day* or the beautiful "Velvet Shoes." When a first grader loses a tooth, *One Morning in Maine* is eagerly accepted to assure your six-year-old that he is not falling apart. There are so many poems that are appropriate for spontaneous use in the class—to save a member embarrassment or overcome a tense situation. For the most part, however, you will have to do a bit of teaching to help your children learn to listen with appreciation to literature. A carefully structured lesson will add immeasurably to the preparation of oral reading.

At Southern Methodist University students enrolled in children's literature go into the schools to tell stories. We have found that the introduction and conclusion of the story constitute the most difficult part of their storytelling. Students who work hard preparing their presentation on tape and reworking their selection for just the right dramatic quality find that the story falls flat if they try to begin with just "Once upon a time . . ." The addition of a few minutes of class preparation to set the stage for listening is most beneficial. This measure may be a simple "Have you ever had a rabbit?" or "What would it be like to have a bear for a pet?" The preparation might be very elaborate—a puppet show, a bulletin board, or a field trip.

Sometimes, even the shock treatment is effective. Edmund Farrell discusses the time that he purposely enraged a slow class to get them interested in a story. He passed out small pieces of paper, had each pupil write his name on it, and place it in a horper. By this time the class was mildly interested. "Almost all of you did very well on the last examination," Mr. Farrell explained, "but since it is my policy to fail at least a few students and since I want to be fair, I thought the best procedure would be to draw out the names of those students who would not pass." The students, needless to say, broke into a mild riot. (They questioned not only his sanity but those on the back row even questioned his parentage, he states.) He calmed them by saying that he would reconsider his policy, but first he wanted to read a selection to them. He followed by reading Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" to a most receptive and interested group.

The "follow up" after the selection has been read is important in helping your children learn to listen appreciatively. The technique used to tie the package together will be unique for each art form and, indeed, for each selection. For example, after hearing and enjoying a poem, the class might discuss what they "saw" as they listened to the poem or what words the poet used to suggest color, sound, or mood. You would not want to analyze every poem, but this would be one approach to facilitate listening.

I have some delightful papers a student teacher in the fifth grade shared with me. Her children closed their eyes to see the scene painted by Robert Frost's "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening." They are delightful. One youngster described the scene as he saw it—"the horse with the questioning expressin" and "That Mr. Robert Frost, he writes good." Your first responsibility toward helping your class listen is to get their attention and extend their after-listening interest by bridging the gap between their own experiences and the new experiences that they will encounter while hearing the selection.

The second responsibility of the teacher who uses oral reading effectively is the ability to read the selection well. To be most effective, you will need to read the selection aloud before persenting it to your class. Of course, it is obvious that you must know the subject matter of your selection. A librarian friend of mine remembers with horror the mistake that she made of orally reading *It's Like This Cat* to a group without first reading it herself. It had just been announced as the Newbery Award winner, and she was anxious to share the new book with her story telling group. All went well up to the point where the book presents the extremely realistic picture of male cats that wander about at night. She tried to paraphrase and omit some of the terms, phrases, and sentences until she was hopelessly lost. However, by "reading the selection well," I refer to the oral presentation. I have found that many books and poems that I have read to myself for years and felt quite confident about certain words that I mispronounce in oral reading. This discovery, too, can be very embarrassing when you are reading before a class. Be sure then, that you have read the selection to be acquainted with the subject matter and that you have orally practiced for pronunciation and enunciation. Practice for dramatic quality—the pause at just the right place and the intonation. Be comforatable with your poem so that it is not sing-song but real music in words. In short, be able to read or tell your selection well if you want your children to listen appreciatively.

Your third responsibility is to provide an environment that is as conducive to listening as possible. The following guidelines will help produce such a climate: 1) Try to eliminate as many interruptions as you can, if your audience will be young children, be sure that everyone has had the opportunity to go to the restroom and get a drink. 2) Anticipate words or ideas that will need clarification and explain unfamiliar concepts before reading or telling your story. 3) Have clutter and distractions out of the way; a particularly interesting pin or dangling earrings tend to side track your listeners. 4) Get the children near you if this is feasible, I like to sit on the floor with my children around me when I am telling a story to the very young, and I sit on a low chair with older ones. There is a real psychological advantage in being at eye level instead of towering over a class of boys and girls. 5) If it is a picture book you are sharing with your class, use an opaque projector if you can do so without causing distractions, or learn to hold the book so that all may see. At least assure the back row that they will be the first to get the book after you have finished. 6) Explain to the children that they should remember any questions or comments that they have for discussion after the story is finished. Train your children not to interrupt. They will accept this procedure as being to their advantage when they realize that a story or poem is much more enjoyable if it is completed. 7) Obviously, the room environment should be comfortable. Excessive heat, cold, glare, or outside noise are all distracting. These distractions, of course, cannot always be eliminated, but at least be aware of the importance of the environment in which you tell your story.

If we are to teach our children to listen to creative work, the fourth responsibility is to use variety. There must be variety in the types of literature that you share with the children—prose, poetry, drama. Variety must be provided in the range of both classical and contemporary literature that you present—picture stories, folk tales, fiction, biography, fantasy, and factual selections. Variety also involves the use of different techniques to bring to life the best in literature. For example, teach the children how to read and tell stories to a group; use the best recordings which are available separately or in connection with filmstrips; use television, tapes, films (e.g., Weston Woods, *Time of Wonder*, and other Caldecott films and filmstrips are excellent); provide a listening corner in your room or library where children may listen independently to recordings, and make creative use of such aids as chalk talks, flannel boards, bulletin displays, and puppets for the presentation of specific literature. Use variety in the selections you share with your class and variety in the methods you employ to enjoy literature.

To conclude, then, I would contend that the inclusion of oral literature is a responsibility of the good teacher, not an extra, a frill, a reward, or an excuse for teacher preparation. It is a vital part of the elementary, secondary, and college program. One has only to look in almost any issue of *The Reading Teacher* for support of this view. In January of this year, Mark Taylor said, "Concerned as we are with teaching children to read, we must take thought as to why they should read. . . . A teacher who does not read on her own and who does not share the best in books with children is living a lie every time she teaches reading." You as a teacher should give students the opportunity to listen appreciatively for enjoyment, ethical values, academic learning, and aesthetic growth. You should structure carefully a program of oral presentation and furnish students with a broad, rich background in an environment which is conducive to listening. You should seek variety in the literature and in the methods of presentation. If you provide these priceless listening advantages for your students, you will be a teacher who is remembered rather than forgotten or forgiven; but much more important, your students will carry to adulthood experiences worth remembering and continuing.

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At every level, literature presents many opportunities for the reading of plays. Yet this art, inherently delightful to most students, requires careful teaching with unique pitfalls to be overcome. DR. SANDKE's suggestions, therefore, are fitting and useful.

Teaching the Reading of Plays

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TEACHING THE READING of plays may seem at first thought to be an unnecessary topic. Why, you may ask, does a student need special training to read plays? If he can read a short story or a novel, if he has mastered a few of the complexities of poetry, he should have no difficulty reading a play. After all, a play is simply a story told in dialog form with a few bits of description to give us the setting and occasional stage directions to remind us that the characters are capable of movement. If the play is written in verse, the student is likely to encounter metrical forms no more difficult than blank verse or heroic couplets. Even the figurative language he encounters in a play is not likely to have the complexity or the compression that he has already met in poetry. So we come back to the question—why should a student, already trained in reading prose and verse, need special training to read plays?

My answer is blunt: a play is not a story told in dialog form. A play, furthermore, is not meant to be read. A play is meant to be acted before an audience. A play exists only in performance, as a symphony exists only when played. In the same way that a symphony exists to be listened to, a play exists to be heard and seen. Unfortunately, it is a sad fact of our academic existence that we cannot teach plays in their proper form; we must teach them from the printed page. Many of us have taught plays in printed form for so long that we have come to think of them as having an existence only between the covers of a book. We have forgotten that a play is like a recipe, and we are starving our students by feeding them the recipe instead of the finished dish.

The distinction we must make is similar to that made by T. S. Eliot in his essay "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation," which appears among his *Essays on Elizabethan Drama.* Eliot points out that Greek plays were written to be performed whereas Seneca's plays were not designed to be acted:

> If we imagine this unacted drama, we see at once that it is at one remove from reality, compared with the Greek. Behind the dialogue of Greek drama we are always conscious of a specific emotional actuality. Behind the drama of words is the drama of action, the timbre of voice and voice, the uplifted hand or tense muscle, and the particular emotion. The spoken play, the words which we read, are symbols, a shorthand, and often, as in the best of Shakespeare, a very abbreviated shorthand indeed, for the acted and felt play, which is always the real thing.

Our task, then, is to train the student to recognize that what he is reading is not the play but, in Eliot's words, "a shorthand. . .for the acted and felt play, which is always the real thing." We must in some way teach the student to take the play off the page and put it onto his mental stage. To put it another way, we must make him aware of the text behind the words—the sounds, the movements, the interaction of characters, "the specific emotional actuality" of the play.

How do we do this? The ideal way, of course, would be to teach drama directly from the stage, to have students meet the drama as it was intended to be performed. Each campus would have a competent repertory company capable of performing representative plays from the drama of the western world. Students would not read plays in the quiet of their homes or study halls or frantically on buses on their way to school. They would go to the university theater and spend two hours of concentrated viewing and listening to the plays being studied. Obviously, the ideal way is not possible. No acting company can be found that has the wide repertory necessary for the study of the drama of the western world. If such a theater company could be found, few universities would be able—or willing—to support it. Even if some would, this would not solve the problem for the many colleges throughout the country, almost all of which offer some kind of literature course which is intended, among other things, to introduce the student to the mysteries of reading plays.

If the student cannot study plays in their true form, what can we do? To go to the opposite end of the scale, we can exhort him to read the plays as they were meant to be performed, like many introductory drama texts do. They suggest that the student become his own director, make a floor plan of the stage setting, and cast his play. As teachers, however, we are well aware that exhortation has little value. If the student has no familiarity with plays or fails to make the connection between what he sees on the stage and what is written in a text, exhortations are of less value. What, then, can we do to solve this dilemma? On the one hand we have the impossibility of giving the student the play in its proper form, and on the other hand we have the impracticality of exhorting the student to read the play as a performance.

The solution that I offer is a middle way open to almost any teacher of plays. In brief, it consists of providing the students with staged readings of scenes from plays they are currently studying—and further, of involving at least some of them in a modified performance of the plays.

The concept of a staged reading requires explanation. A staged reading falls between a static reading and a full-blown production. It differs from a static reading in that the readers go through all the gestures and movements that are expressly or implicitly called for by the text of the play. The readers not only read the lines but also act out the stage business. The chief difference between a staged reading and a full-blown production is that the readers do not memorize their lines. They carry the text of the play with them while performing. This last action is essential in order to avoid converting the staged reading rehearsals into acting courses and in order to encourage the neophyte to participate in staged readings. Freed of the burden of memorizing, the students are able to give their attention to the way in which all the elements of drama come together in its performance. (A staged reading differs from a full-blown production also in that it makes little use of costume or makeup. The extent to which these are used depends pretty much on the energy and initiative of the teacher and the students. Again, it is important that the mechanics of the theater not obscure the primary purpose of the staged reading.) A staged reading, then, consists of students carrying the text of the play, reading their lines, and going through the actions required by the text of the play.

Where is the staged reading presented? The answer to this, first of all, is that it is presented before an audience. Plays are meant to be presented to audiences. In the case of staged readings, the audience consists of other members of the literature class. They have read the play, or are about to read it, and they will now see a portion of it presented. The further answer to the question of where the staged reading is presented is that it is presented in the classroom. It should not be presented in an auditorium or on a stage, for it is important to remember that the staged reading is a teaching device, not a poor substitute for a dramatic performance. It helps if the classroom has movable furniture so that an acting area may be set up at any place in the classroom, but ingenuity can solve even the problems posed by fixed furniture. Any area is a stage as soon as the staged readers have defined it as such.

Because the students do not have to memorize lines, a staged reading does not require extensive rehearsal time. Depending on the complexity of the scene to be done, four to six rehearsals are usually adequate. To some of you who may be acquainted with play production, this number of rehearsals may seem startlingly small. It must be rememebred, however, that the purpose of a staged reading is not to bring a finished dramatic performance before the class. The staged reading is merely intended to demonstrate to the class the manifold elements that make up a play.

A few additional words may be necessary to clarify the concept of staged readings. First of all, you and your students may be bothered by the sight of readers simultaneously carrying a text and going about the business of gesturing, embracing, dueling, or dying. I can only assure you that the presence of the text soon disappears as the action of the play takes over. Indeed, the ingenious stage reader can sometimes convert the text into a prop. I recall one young lady, playing the role of a maid, who placed the text on her oustretched palms and in so doing momentarily converted it into an imaginary tray appropriate to her role as maid. Part of the secret of drama, after all, is illusion. A word of advice should also be given to students who will view the staged reading. Their first tendency will be to open their texts and follow the words as they are being spoken by the readers, much as the symphony buff sitting in the gallery follows the score at a concert. Such a practice is acceptable for the symphonygoer, for he loses nothing of the symphony while his eyes are on the score; but it is fatal to the purposes of a staged reading. The class must be instructed to put aside their texts and to listen closely to the words of the play and watch closely the movements of the staged readers. After the class has viewed the staged reading, they can go back to the text and read with insights gained from watching a staged reading. Finally, in the usual classroom situation, it is not feasible to prepare a staged reading of an entire play. I have found it most fruitful to select a scene or scenes that will run about thirty minutes. The remainder of the class time should be devoted to discussion of the elements of the play that have been revealed by the staged reading.

What is achieved by the use of staged readings in conjunction with the study of plays? In general, the staged readings make the students aware of the nonverbal elements of a play and of how these nonverbal elements operate in conjunction with the words to create the texture of the play. To be specific, let me limit myself to three aspects of plays that can be illustrated by means of a staged reading:

1) that a play proceeds at a varying pace,
2) that characters are constantly interacting, and
3) that nonspeaking characters may exert a powerful influence on the effect of a scene.

In reading a play silently to ourselves, we are likely to read it at a more or less uniform rate. Plays, for example, may be read in much less time than the two hours or so that it takes to perform them. But it is important for the play reader to be aware of the varying pace at which the play proceeds. Part of the effect of the play may depend on this varying rhythm. In prose fiction, the author can control our pace of reading by his choice of words, his sentence length, and the complexity of his sentence structure. In the printed text of a play, however, the playwright has little control over the pace since his characters' words are always interrupted by the name of the next character to speak. The reader, consequently, goes down the page to the measure of *Hamlet, Polonius, Hamlet, Polonius, Hamlet, Polonius,* (*Enter the Queen*). Furthermore, because of the nature of the printed text of a play, we meet the characters alternately: that is, one character speaks; the other character speaks; and so on. But on the stage we meet the characters simultaneously. While one character is speaking, the other is reacting to the words of the speaker, and his reaction may be as important as the words that are being spoken. Finally, if a character's name does not pop up for a page or so, the untrained reader is likely to forget his presence. Yet his presence on the stage must be important, or the playwright would have found some means to get him off. The reader of a play must in some way be trained to catch the varying rhythms of the dialog, to be aware of the unspoken reactions of characters, and to sense the effect of the presence of a nonspeaking character.

These points can be illustrated by a consideration of the closing episode of Chekhov's play *Uncle Vanya*. The two principal characters, Vanya and Sonya, have accepted their humdrum lives as caretakers of a country estate, the absentee owner of which is a retired professor. The monotony of their daily existence has been upset when the professor and his pretty, young wife come to spend some time on the estate. Their visit is an exciting interlude in the lives of Vanya and Sonya, but when the professor and his wife have left, Vanya and Sonya are again painfully aware of the emptiness of their lives. They have lost the illusions that had formerly sustained them in their dull routine. The last speech in the play is delivered by Sonya, as she attempts to find consolation for herself and Vanya. Her speech begins with an insistence that they must go on living "through a long, long chain of days and endless eveings," but very quickly it finds its note of consolation in the rest that death will bring for them. Throughout the remainder of the speech, the words "We shall rest" return again and again, like a refrain. In the text, the speech takes up approximately a page, which, of course, can be read very quickly. In the acted play, however, the speech must be delivered very slowly, in keeping with the slow pace to which the lives of Vanya and Sonya have returned. Its delivery on the stage might take as much as ten times the amount of time that it takes to read it silently. A staged reading can demonstrate this slow tempo with which the play ends.

And what is Vanya doing throughout this speech? The printed page tells us simply that he is sitting while Sonya delivers her speech and that, at one point in her speech, tears come to his eyes. But what is his posture during the speech? Does he remain completely motionless while Sonya speaks? In the classroom a staged reading can suggest the possible answers to these questions.

It is furthermore important to realize that four other characters make their presence felt while Sonya delivers her speech, though none of them says a word. One of them is an impoverished dolt who whiles away his empty life by hanging around the estate. Just before Sonya's speech, he tiptoes in and begins to tune his guitar quietly; during her speech, he plays softly in the background. Two of the other nonspeaking characters are the professor's mother-in-law, who is engaged in her endless activity of making notes in the margin of an intellectual pamphlet, and an old nurse, who sits knitting a stocking. The fourth nonspeaking character does not even appear on the stage; he is a watchman whose tapping is heard as he makes his rounds of the estate. Thus, although the untrained reader might focus his attention on Sonya's final words to the exclusion of the other characters, the trained reader will react not to the solo speech alone but to the orchestration of that solo against the background of an ensemble of sounds and characters whose presence reminds one of the interminable monotony that Sonya and Vanya must live through before they can find the consolation of rest. To say, as the untrained reader might, that the play closes with Sonya's speech is to overlook the rich assortment of nonverbal elements that Chekhov has brought together to produce the poignant, bittersweet tone with which his play ends.

At this point, if I were to follow the grooves of academe, I should bring forth some statistics demonstrating to the second decimal place the exact degree of success one can expect to achieve in teaching the reading of plays by means of staged readings. I have no statistics to offer. It can only say that in six years of applying the concept of staged readings to the teaching of plays, I have found it an effective tool. It does not work with every student, but then I do not know of any single teaching device that does. I urge you to try it in the hope that more students will acquire the ability to convert the shorthand of the printed play into what T. S. Eliot has called "the acted and felt play, which is always the real thing."

Poetry permeates our culture. Witness the endless chant of the television commercial, the doggerel of the disk jockey show. But poetry with substance may arouse suspicion and prejudice in wary students. What can the teacher do to dispel the preconception that serious poetry is suspect? And, having built interest, what elements of poetic analysis might the teacher seek to explore with his students?

Improving the Literature Program: Poetry

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TEACHERS OF LITERATURE, whether it be of English, French, Russian, Spanish, or other origins, share with teachers of reading a large if obvious responsibility: that of instructing their students in the skills and arts of reading. For understanding and enjoyment, which together constitute what one may term genuine *appreciation*, depend upon the awareness of depth and breadth as well as superficial comprehension of what is read.

In a most suggestive article by Edgar Dale, the necessities for reading any sort of author's expression are detailed clearly and definitely:

> One of the most important outcomes of a general education is *learning how to learn*. And there is no more important element in reaching this goal than improving reading skills and attitudes.
>
> We too often assume that reading is a mechanical process, a skill subject, something to be completed in the lower elementary grades. We think we've gone far enough in teaching reading when the student can read without undue consciousness of the words—when he has learned the reading skills.
>
> Yet there is a vast difference between the skill of reading, in which we concentrate on what the book says, and the art of reading, which enables us to discover what the article, pamphlet, or book meant to the author and what it now means to us.
>
> First, there is the task of getting the simple sense of what the writer says. This means noting the words and phrases of the passage and relating them to each other. Let's call this reading the lines. It is the simple level of reproducing what was said.

> The second job in reading is to discover what the author meant to say. The literal meaning of the passage may lead to a wrong interpretation. The author may have written ironically or sarcastically.
>
> Understanding metaphors may offer difficulties. To accept the metaphor of the Twenty-Third Psalm, one must think of himself as a sheep (without, of course, extending the metaphor to carry the idea of being sheeplike). We may call this second aspect reading between the lines.
>
> There is a third level of reading which is highly individual. We judge or interpret what is read in the light of our own problems, own experiences. We may call this reading beyond the lines. We say to ourselves after reading an article or an editorial: What does this mean to me? How can I make use of it? It is this third phase of the reading process—the application of what is read—that is often neglected (*1*).

These levels, identified with admirable clarity by Edgar Dale, apply broadly to all forms and types of reading. But what of the reading of poetry? What special skills, insights, and understanding of techniques must be fostered to assist the neophyte in his awareness of what poets throughout the literate ages have contributed to our cultural heritage and our accumulated wisdom?

Young people's fear of poetry

At the very outset, most young male and quite a few young female readers are utterly repelled at the mere thought of reading verse, thinking it to be the product of silly, inane, and highly suspect persons. This attitude seems to come as the child leaves the early years, perhaps at the age of 10 or 11 or even 12, and serves to present a complete block to any reasonable understanding. Moreover, this very prejudice will persist largely throughout life if some capable and thoughtful teacher does not appear to quell it once and forever.

It is not enough merely to reiterate that there is more to poetic expression than may be found in such pieces as "Flower in the Crannied Wall" or "To a Daffodil." Many young readers cringe and fear for their lifelong reputation should they dare to entertain the thought that such a descriptive or lyric passage could possibly have meaning for them. After all, they do have their self-respect to protect.

Hence it seems obligatory to many a teacher of reading or literature to dispel immediately and for all time to come the feeling that the reading—or writing, for that matter—of poetry is "sissy stuff." For young college readers, I resort to a melodramatic half hour of reading aloud. After a brief consideration of the attitude that all poetic expression tends exclusively to consist of silly rhymes or empty or mawkish or effeminate or insignificant matters, I turn to Amy Lowell's "Patterns" and read it out, slowly enough to permit everyone to recognize the passion, the pathos, the dreadful inevitability of the situation. With a particularly sluggish group, I resort to loud and anguished tones for the last line: "Christ! What are patterns for?" The ensuing silence is finally broken by a disdainful comment, "Sissy stuff!"

Continuing the same approach, I then usually read half a dozen of the most bitter pieces from *Spoon River Anthology*, such as "Ollie McGee," "Fletcher McGee," "Robert Fulton Tanner," "Cassius Hueffer," "Benjamin Pantier," "Mrs. Benjamin Pantier," and others, concluding with the rollicking and full-blooded "Lucinda Matlock." In the same vein I often read Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Richard Cory." The ironic refrain at the close of each poetic selection, "sissy stuff!" or something synonymous, serves to dispel for almost every listener, whether he wishes to admit it at the moment, the belief that true poetry is without depth and universal appeal.

Having disposed of the skeptics, the rebellious "hoodlums," as John H. Weston calls them (*4*), or the fearfully reluctant, the skilled teacher may then safely proceed to the significant matter of the intrinsic value of practice in reading poetry. As Thomas E. Sanders expresses it:

> The demands of our society are such that the "good" reader is rewarded momentarily, psychologically, and spiritually. And nothing helps the student become a "good" reader as much as poetry. Once he has learned to comprehend through the poetic line, prose becomes much easier for him to read and to write.
>
> The compression of poetry actually serves comprehension, as a complete work can be examined on one page. The processes of organization, logical thinking, established communication—all can be pointed out in their limited confines. Prose offers no such possibilities. The lengths de-

> manded by the various forms (short stories, essays, novels) create problems in the simple logistics of page numbers if nothing else. Once the student has mastered poetic understanding, however, he can accommodate widely spaced ideas in prose, understanding the transitional elements which poetry makes logical (3).

When this principle is assimiliated and understood, it is time to begin particular poems for thorough analysis.

Critical reading of verse

At this point, the individual instructor's own preferences or feelings of personal effectiveness may come into play. Perhaps he may choose to dwell upon the significant similarities and differences to be observed in the treatment of specific descriptions, narrations, expositions of ideas, and arguments in poetry as distinguished from prose passages. While readers will find many likenesses between the two, the instructor will need to emphasize the greater concision, intensity, and rhythmical and melodious qualities to be revealed in poetic materials. Many reading and literature teachers begin with the simplest and most obvious, that of the language of poetry, and proceed to poetic phrasing, prosody, and the kinds of poetic form, including couplets, tercets, quatrains, etc.

As I see it in any event, soon or late but preferably very early in the training, each neophyte reader should be made fully aware that poetic communication is *expressed through words and punctuatio*n to develop verse-sentences and, frequently, verse-paragraphs. Simple and plain as this may be to the experienced reader, it comes as a great surprise and means of assistance as well to those unaccustomed to reading poems.

With the necessary preliminaries accomplished, the instructor may then proceed to utilize the kinds of discussion prompted by the use of such a guide as Lynn Altenbernd and Leslie L. Lewis' *Handbook for the Study of Poetry* (New York: MacMillan, 1966). This handy little manual begins with language and considers problems of imagery, figurative language, rhetorical devices; it goes on to poetic forms, touching upon rhyme and alliteration, and versification and stanzaic or verse patterns. Finally it leads to consideration of poetic content, specifically as to narrative, emotion, historical context, and the like. For a guidebook of not more than eighty-odd pages, this handbook will prove most helpful to the student and his instructor. One other similar introduction to the reading of poetry may be cited, though there are perhaps a half dozen more that could be mentioned. A much more extensive treatment for the beginning reader of verse is that published by Thomas E. Sanders and titled the *Discovery of Poetry* (3). This treatment also begins with language and poetic meaning and develops at some length the matters of syllables, feet, rhyme and pattern of stanza, and fixed forms like the couplet and quatrain; it then discusses the sonnet and other standard forms and blank verse, and concludes with reading narrative and dramatic poetry. This book provides a great deal more illustrative material than the handbook for a total of almost four hundred pages. Both guides are most useful, however, and will lead the young or immature reader of verse to some solid thinking about the many qualities and aspects of poetic expression.

A still more comprehensive and analytical approach is to be achieved by the use of the following study-and-discussion guide, which I frequently find useful.

In a course which uses a types approach or which provides a collection of poems ordered by types of poetic form, I customarily begin with questions about the literary forms represented. The first question, otherwise, usually concern poetic language. Thus sections I and V, or other for that matter, may be interchanged as desired or appropriate.

TOPICS FOR POETIC ANALYSIS

I. Types of structure
    A. Lyric
        1. Sonnet, Italian, English, irregular
        2. Ballade
        3. Rondeau, roundel
        4. Other French forms
        5. Ode
        6. Elegy
        7. Other

- B. Narrative
    - 1. Ballad, folk or literary
    - 2. Dramatic monologue
    - 3. Epic
        - a. Traditional, literary
    - 4. Saga
    - 5. Other
- C. Satire
    - 1. Mock heroic
    - 2. Burlesque
    - 3. Other type or form?

II. Pattern

- A. Meter
    - 1. Accented and unaccented syllables
    - 2. Feet: iambic, trochaic, dactyllic, anapestic, etc.
- B. Line length: monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter
- C. Rhyme scheme—internal rhyme?
- D. Blank verse
- E. Free verse
- F. Stanza: couplet, tercet, quatrain, quintain, sestet, septet, octave

III. Thought or feeling

- A. Poet's theme, purpose
- B. Poet's mood
- C. Passages typical of the poem or the poet
- D. Age and circumstances of the author, his "background"
- E. Narrative or thread of story
- F. Plot—how conveyed, prominent or submerged, essentially *dramatic?*
- G. Characters
- H. Setting, outdoor nature
- I. Treatments similar in theme
- J. Originality, literary or natural inspiration, individually particular to poet
- K. Notable divisions of theme or idea, cumulative effect from stanza to stanza

IV. Historical significance—poet shows such style(s), manner(s) as

- A. Allegory, symbolism
- B. Impressionistic

  - C. Realistic, universal
  - D. Other
- V. Language expression
  - A. Words
    1. Image-bearing words
    2. Action-bearing words
    3. Words striking for *connotation*
    4. Words unusual, startling, beautiful in their context
    5. Archaisms used, colloquialisms, dialect
    6. Kinds of words that bear the burden—adjective, noun, adverb
  - B. Phrases
    1. Idiom conservative or racy, appropriate to the matter
    2. Originality (vs. threadbare expressions)
    3. Noteworthy combinations of word-series, compound words
  - C. Figures
    1. Similes
    2. Metaphors
    3. Other frequently appearing figures such as personification
    4. Much or little of the feeling of the poem produced by these figures, *inevitable*, add right touch of vividness, blend in with tone of piece or produce discord, disharmony
  - D. Syntax
    1. Distortion of normal sentence order
    2. Symmetrical units of structure used
    3. Thoughts flow from line to line, stanza to stanza
    4. Balance within verse-sentences
  - E. "Devices"
    1. Hyperbole
    2. Understatement
    3. Question
    4. Exclamation
    5. Apostrophe
    6. Refrain
    7. "Aside"
    8. Author intrudes himself into view
    9. Alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, consonance

Topics like these, while suggestive and helpful, do not by any means exhaust the possibilities. The poet's own life and general outlook, the qualities of the era in which he lived, the literary habits of his "school" or of writers with his outlook or bias—all these and many more will be developed and used profitably by the resourceful instructor. Moreover, these techniques, forms of analysis, or devices for understanding are but the *means*. The *end* sought is never to be lost sight of, however interesting or rewarding the study of form or language or any other of these approaches may become. The goal constantly to be kept in focus is understanding; it is full and comprehensive and active appreciation of the poet's meaning, art, and intent. Little more may be accomplished, in truth. And nothing less will suffice.

To bring all this about, the literature or reading teacher is eminently responsible.

For to quote a brief statement from a wise and suggestive essay by Richard Lewis:

> After all is said and done, the teacher—who brings his own enthusiasm for a poem . . ., who links together the particles of excitement that form the character of the classroom—is the one who determines the influence which poetry will have. . . . It will be his intuition which will cause him to remain silent . . . , or to mention again an idea brought up briefly the week before, or to linger on a word and its beauty. It will be his manner of praise or criticism, his test in choosing material, his way of reading which will bring the final impression to fruition (2).

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The special province of the storyteller is the eye-to-eye and voice-to-ear transmission of organized experience. It is the oldest technique of literature—still the greatest challenge, and potentially the most rewarding.

The Storyteller's Role

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ONE OF OUR COUNTRY's great storytellers, Ruth Sawyer, has said: "If the listening years are filled to the brim, the years ahead will never run dry." I agree with her. I therefore believe that every teacher, librarian, and relative of a child should read and tell stories to children.

Choose the stories and books with care. They should be of highest literary quality—a good story with a worthwhile theme.

Choose often the book that the child cannot yet read and enjoy to the fullest by himself. We must ever remember that most children's reading abilities lag behind their capacity to read, to enjoy, to appreciate, and to understand. For example, children who cannot yet read *Charlotte's Web, Just-So Stories,* or *Winnie the Pooh* can, nevertheless, enter the enchantment of these books when read aloud to them.

Choose fare for storytelling carefully. Remember, our school audiences for storytelling are captive audiences. Make them willing captives! Note the wealth of purposes and values that inspired storytelling can achieve:

To entertain
To create wonder
To enliven the imagination
To create a love for good literature
To enlarge a child's experience
To teach
To develop a sense of humor
To perpetuate history and ideals
To expose sham
To develop verbal expression
To train memory
To create a realization of the brotherhood of man

To increase the child's span of attention
To develop his powers of concentration
To improve his listening habits
To enlarge his vocabulary

The specific role of storytelling in the reading program is, first, to cause the child to know what joys are to be found in print. The storyteller should always have the book from which the story comes, and he should display it before his audience.

Second, listening to stories is broadening; it increases the child's vocabulary, ideas, and knowledge and thereby helps him along the road to being ready to read.

Third, children frequently tell parents or other children the story they have just heard, and thus their command of language is increased.

Fourth, listening to many *good* stories *well told* affords a child with an avenue for appreciating right choices of words—words of strength, beauty, and suitability.

To sum up: storytelling makes children *want to read* and contributes to their *readiness to read.*

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The bold program of Hunter College Project English gives evidence that good literature, traditional and current, produces excellent results with the culturally disadvantaged. Some ideas and selections from the program could be used to bolster any literature curriculum intended for any group of students.

Gateway English—A Literature Program For Educationally Disadvantaged Students

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NOT LONG AGO I was showing a friend and colleague, a man genuinely concerned about the civil rights of the poor and underprivileged minorities in our society, the anthologies developed by The Hunter College Project English Curriculum Center for deprived academically underachieving junior high school children. My colleague was initially attracted by and thoroughly approved of the photographic illustrations which reflected the diversity of ethnic groups which comprise our nation. He went on to scan the table of contents, which included selections by Richard Wright, the Benets, Saroyan, La Farge, Auden, and Yeats as well as stories and verse by unknowns, popular song writers, and authors of adolescent fiction. Lingering over the adult, relatively "big" names, my colleague finally raised his eyes, puzzled, even a little disapproving. "But isn't the literature too—" he hesitated, seeking a word, "*too good* for these children?"

My colleague's reaction is symptomatic of a widely held view of what education is most appropriate for economically deprived and low achieving students. This point of view, made vividly explicit in Conant's recommendations for educating the youth, out-of-school and out-of-work, whom he described as "social dynamite," has been endorsed by federal legislation supporting a variety of programs for job training which supplement and somewhat redefine earlier vocational educational programs. In the teaching of English this point of view is exemplified in programs for the disadvantaged which emphasize "practical English" and which utilize reading "materials" dealing with such topics as job interviews, grooming, dating, and the dangers of smoking pot.

I do not propose to raise questions here about the utility of such programs and such materials in providing adolescents with needed vocational and personal guidance. I do believe, however, that if such programs and such materials *replace* an appropriately conceived program in literature and the language arts for disadvantaged adolescents, these children will be ill-served indeed. Certainly students whose scores on standardized reading tests are substantially below grade, who do not respond to traditional English curricula, who reject and are rejected by their schools and many of their teachers, require a different kind of English curriculum. But the differences introduced to meet retarded reading skills, to arouse latent interests, to exploit particular experiences, and to build self-regard and self-confidence need not and should not subvert the special contributions which literature and the language arts can make in the education of all children. If it is true, as Muriel Rukeyser declared, that poverty "makes thin the imagination and the bone," poor children especially need all the riches literature can supply.

This rather lengthy preamble to a description of the Gateway English curriculum is intended to expose at the outset its essential orientation. It is not a program of practical English. It is not a remedial reading program. The reading skills taught are developmental, critical, literary rather than basic. This kind of clarification is particularly important since, as the only one of the U.S. Office of Education Project English Curriculum Development Centers whose purpose is to develop an English curriculum for educationally disadvantaged and academically retarded students, it is sometimes assumed to have prepared a program for students either *severely* retarded in reading or innately, seriously limited in intellectual capacity. In fact, the program is designed for adolescents of average ability whose reading retardation is assumed to stem primarily from low self-concept and alienation from school in general and from reading and the English language arts in particular.

The Hunter College Gateway English Project contracted to develop an integrated language arts curriculum for students in grades 7 through 9 who, as a consequence of environmental disadvantages in home, community, and school, had average reading scores approximately two grades below national norms for their grade. In fact, the Gateway units have been field tested in grades 7 through 11 with students in upper grades reading up to four grades below their class assignment as well as with students on and above grade. Our target population was the disadvantaged student in depressed urban centers: often, for the sociological reasons with which we are all familiar, these students are members of minority groups. But students who have actually participated in field trials of the curriculum have included white, rural, and suburban students as well. Gateway English curriculum units have been and are being field tested in selected classes in the following communities: New York City; Baltimore, Maryland; Cleveland, Ohio; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Westport, Connecticut; Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Florida; San Diego, San Jose, Berkeley and Benecia, California. The ethnic composition of pilot classes has been all "white," all Negro, predominantly Puerto Rican, predominantly Mexican American, and integrated. Teachers of pilot classes have included beginning and experienced teachers of English and those teaching English out of license.

Funded in 1962, the Hunter College Project English Curriculum Development Center will complete its contract by the end of 1967. By this time we will have completed, field tested, and revised for publication twelve literature-centered units, four for each of the junior high school grades, and a unit on narrative writing suitable for use in any of these grades.

In terms of our contract, the Hunter College Project English Curriculum Center aims are to aid underprivileged and underachieving junior high school students to read with increased interest and skill; to improve their ability to communicate their perceptions, feelings, and ideas; and most importantly, to develop their sense of self-worth and their understanding of themselves and the human condition. Although skills are incorporated in the curriculum, what is most distinctive about it, especially as a curriculum for the disadvantaged, is its focus on these humanistic aims.

What are the more specific elements and key strategies of the curriculum embodied in the anthologies for children and in the manual and instructional aids for teachers? To begin with, the curriculum is thematically organized. In each grade, three of the four units are developed around themes selected for their relevance to the personal and social concerns of adolescents; the literature core in each of these units consists of short works or excerpts from longer works in fiction, biography, other non-fiction, drama, and poetry. A fourth unit in each grade explores comparable themes but in this instance entirely through poetry.

The seventh grade units have these titles: *A Family Is a Way of Feeling*, *Stories in Song and Verse*, *Who Am I?*, and *Coping*. Eighth grade units are *Striving*, *A Westerner Sampler*, *Creatures in Verse*, and *Two Roads to Greatness*. Ninth grade units are *Rebels and Regulars*, *People in Poetry*, *Something Strange*, and a still untitled unit on *justice*. As their titles suggest, the themes for the seventh grade relate closely to the student himself; the literature presents familiar, personal, and relatively concrete situations in which mostly youthful protagonists cope with human relations in family, school, and peer group. In the eighth grade the themes are explored in literature in which the milieu is larger in scope and less immediately related to the students' own experience. In two of the eighth grade units the literature centers on life and historic figures in the American past. *A Westerner Sampler* introduces, through literature about the American Indian, the concepts of cultural identity and culture conflict; it also examines, through the American Western as a print and film genre, stereotyped versus more realistic presentations of character and solutions to social dilemmas. *Two Roads to Greatness*, an anthology of biography, drama, verse, and fiction, presents as parallel models of struggle, despair, and achievement the lives of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. In the ninth grade, *People in Poetry* explores the relatively sophisticated concept of individuality in its inward and outward manifestations. *Rebels and Regulars* deals with the personally and socially important issue of conformity and nonconformity; *Something Strange*, through fantasy and science fiction, is concerned with such questions as what is man? what is human society? what is real? what is illusory?

The thematic organization of the Gateway English curriculum was selected for a number of reasons. In the first place, the selection of themes relevant to the engrossing personal and social concerns of adolescents sets in motion the process of identification between the reader and the book which is a powerful motivating force. In the second place, literature, whether it be folk or popular literature or the literary masterpiece, is, after all, about these persistent human questions: who am I? what is just? who has first claim to my loyalty? and, am I my brother's keeper? Great works, individually studied, demand consideration in these terms as well as in terms of their formal attributes. But for young adolescents a thematic approach is particularly appropriate to their stage of cognitive development. During this period of transition from the initial concrete manipulative stage of the child's intellectual development to the ultimate stage of abstract symbolization, the middle age child and young adolescent develop the ability to organize experience in larger patterns and to perceive relationships among the elements of their earlier "blooming, buzzing" universe. This intermediate stage which Bruner calls iconic is a period in which, it seems, the individual conceptualizes visually and in which metaphoric representations of experience are particularly cogenial and powerful instruments for learning. Any organization of elements which the learner perceives and understands—ideally, constructs—enhances his comprehension and retention of what we hope he will learn; for children in the age range we are considering a thematic organization of literature and language in such metaphors as *coping, who am I*? or *rebels and regulars* should constitute powerful aids to learning.

The characters, setting, and idiom of the literature selected for English curricula have, like the themes selected, a bearing on students' interest in reading. We have for some time recognized differences in the reading interests of children of different ages and of boys and girls. We have considerably less information about the appeal for different age groups of different literary forms and idioms and many speculations, but little hard evidence, of the influence of differences in ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds on reading interests. Presumably, readers would identify more easily with and thus be more interested in literature in which characters somewhat resembled them or their image of themselves, in which settings had some elements familiar to them, and in which the idiom or style was to some extent similar to that heard in conversation or on TV. The literature selected for the anthologies in the Gateway English curriculum differs from that in traditional anthologies in ways suggested by these assumptions. The selections are drawn primarily from folk literature, including legend and myth, and from contemporary literature because these styles are closer to modern spoken and mass media idioms than the eighteenth and nineteenth century literature which dominates traditional English programs. Most of the protagonists are youthful; some in every unit but one are members of our too often forgotten or stereotyped minorities: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, or Negro Americans. Literature about people from these as well as from dominant white European groups has interested all of the children in our pilot classes. The question sometimes raised by teachers "How many Negro—or Spanish American—students should there be in a class to justify using anthologies which include literature about these groups?" is simply answered. None. As James Baldwin assured one such group of teachers, textbooks which include valid representations of the Negro can contribute significantly to the Negro's self-concept, but at the same time they give to all children the more complete and interesting picture of our world which partial histories and anthologies have robbed them of.

Because children read a number of selections on a single theme, because the theme is often established by a simple legend or by a popular story or song, and because their activities in language and composition are related to the theme and the literature studied within its framework, they build a background of understanding which seems to enable them to read selections presumably "too difficult" for them. Consequently, teachers of our pilot classes consistently report that almost all children are able to read all of the selections in the Gateway anthologies, though these typically range in estimated difficulty from about three years below to at least one year above grade.

Photographs, cartoons, television scripts, and film scripts are included in the literature "read" by students in Gateway English classes. Again, exposure to and discussion of a variety of selections on a common theme make possible and interesting some consideration of literary types, a topic which would ordinarily be quite outside the interest of less able readers.

Within this context students learn such reading skills as these: to follow a variety of narrative sequences—chronological, flashback, the story within a story; to locate details used in characterization; to read for explicit and for extended meanings; and to recognize clues to mood, tone, and foreshadowing to derive word meanings from context. These relatively sophisticated critical reading skills are achieved by previously slow and reluctant readers partly because the literature has extremely high interest for them, but also, we believe, because of the teaching approach employed in the program.

We have taken seriously characterizations of lower class children as more responsive to physically active than to merely verbal learning. Stories and poems are read aloud to and by the children. Role-playing of comparable situations is frequently used to introduce a selection. Incidents in stories are dramatized; choral readings of poems are planned and taped by students. Indeed, Louise Rosenblatt's description of good reading as a "performing art" even when silent, is particularly suggestive to those of us concerned with improving the reading of underprivileged and underachieving students. These children especially, though all children ideally, need to *live themselves* into what they read.

We have found students welcome opportunities to tape their reading—as well as their dramatic improvisations, and we have found, too, that such experiences lead to spontaneous self and peer "corrections" in reading. Since all the verse "read" in the Gateway English is on tapes or records, students hear a good oral reading of each poem before or as they read it themselves. Students' oral reading of these poems often reveals a very close approximation to the professional reader's intonations, stress, and rhyme emphases.

Students respond actively to the literature they read in the Gateway program by drawing scenes and characters. In the ninth grade unit on *People in Poetry* students draw or construct masks to reflect the inner and outer qualities of characters in poems like Richard Cory. Here it is, of course, not the quality of the art product but the students' engagement with visualizing the author's intent which lays the graphic base for the student's eventual verbal formulation of the meaning of the poem. Photographs and reproductions of art works presented to students with the challenge that they associate them individually with individual stories, poems, and characters enable them to demonstrate understanding of mood and tone. Such active, involving, graphic experiences are steps on the road toward perceptive reading.

Of major importance in developing interest and skill in reading among underachieving students is a consistent and intensive effort to make their classroom experiences lead to discoveries. Although students who are not academically gifted may need many more instances, examples, and illustrations than are required by more academically skilled students to grasp and formulate concepts about literature or language or composition, they can and do learn by this inductive method. The "discoveries" *they* make, the definitions and principles *they* formulate are those they *remember*. The common practice of reserving inductive procedures for intellectually gifted and academically successful children while teaching the disadvantaged by drill is, I believe, a major error. It is the lack of sufficient experience in perceiving, generalizing, differentiating, comparing, and ordering that constitutes a major part of the poor and culturally different child's educational disadvantage. Success in these tasks generates what some psychologists have called "competence motivation" which can become cumulative and as self-fulfilling as negative self-concepts may be. The Gateway English program endeavors to build this kind of confidence and motivation among the students for whom it is designed.

Though I have dealt primarily with literature and reading in this account of the program, it is an integrated language arts program. The same strategies of active involvement, graphic presentation, and inductive teaching are used in the language and composition phases of the curriculum.

Because of budget limitations and the administrative difficulties of sustaining a controlled experimental design in large urban schools with shifting student and teacher populations, we have had to rely primarily on field observations and teacher and student reactions in assessing the effectiveness of the program. Our reports from field schools do show better than average gains in reading scores in classes using the Gateway curriculum. But since we do not have adequately controlled evidence, we are inclined to put greater confidence in teacher's reports of increased participation in class and increased interest in reading; many students are reported to be undertaking independent reading for the first time. We are particularly encouraged by such comments as these from students in pilot classes:

> The goals of the Gateway English is [sic] to read more stories and get some ideas from others. They are also for the purpose of getting to have a better conversation with others.

From another student:

> To learn how to speak about ideas and to help each other to better understand things.

It is "to better understand things" that literature must be an integral and central element in English programs for educationally disadvantaged students.

"Most teachers would profit greatly from utilizing the Great Books discussion techniques in their regular classroom work," state the authors of this selection. What is more, they describe these techniques in a highly operational manner.

Junior Great Books Discussion Programs

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and

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABILITY to think and read critically has been an expressed goal of our schools for many years. Yet, good techniques and procedures for teaching pupils this desirable skill are seldom well explained in the professional literature, nor are they practiced in most classrooms today.

Instead, youngsters through the twelfth grade are taught to look for *the* answers to trivial and unrelated questions. By a traditional and superficial means they amass an accumulation of facts often referred to as an "education." Seldom are they led to deal with ideas, to generalize, and to reach conclusions.

In recent "new" programs mathematics has become "modern"; science has adopted the "discovery approach," and even social studies and foreign languages have been revamped. Yet the idea of providing a meaningful, inductive approach to the teaching of literature and reading is unheard of by many teachers.

Surprisingly, a private nonprofit educational organization—the Great Books Foundation—has promoted a discussion method which teaches its participants, whether they be adults or children, the art of critical reading and thinking. Teachers and parents who have taken the Great Books leadership training course have acquired a technique of teaching which is not covered in the usual college reading methods course. Neither is it fully described in any basal reader manual. Yet, it works. It teaches both children and adults to become more critical readers and thinkers.

Description of the program

The Junior Great Books Discussion Program, begun in 1963, is an outgrowth of the Great Books Discussion Program offered to adults since 1947. Youngsters in grades 5 through 12 meet in small groups under the guidance of at least two co-leaders, who may be teachers, parents, or librarians. The adult volunteers conducting the discussion must have completed a tuition-free Leader Training Course offered by the Great Books Foundation. Enrollees take part in a discussion of a book, both as leaders and as discussants, learning to lead a discussion solely through the use of questions.

The foundation publishes five sets of Junior Great Books for pupils in elementary and secondary schools, beginning at the fifth grade. Lists of the readings in each set are provided in the brochure entitled "The Junior Great Books Discussion Program" (5). The sets of paperbound books are sold at cost ($5.50) for use in only those programs utilizing leaders trained by the Great Books Foundation.

These Great Books, read at home, are discussed by groups of 15 to 20 children who gather informally around a conference table once or twice a month. Sessions usually held after school hours or on Saturday are an hour and a half in length. All participants who have read and discussed a given series of Junior Great Books Readings are eligible to receive the achievement award for that series.

Purposes of the program

The co-leaders, through skillful questioning of the participants, have a dual purpose: 1) to increase the group's knowledge of the book under discussion and 2) to guide the group to think about the book in a reflective manner.

A discussion method is advocated as the best way to accomplish this purpose. Members of the group are led to explore the author's meaning rather than accept the co-leaders' opinions. Through his own thinking, a student learns to make his own discoveries about what he has read. In fact, leaders and students together seek a deeper understanding of the author's ideas.

In an explanation of Junior Great Books appearing in the

Colorado School Journal, Brundage noted that instead of "imparting knowledge that he possesses" (as most teachers do), the discussion leader should permit "the author of the book under discussion to become the teacher" (*1*).

As far as the students are concerned, their chief goals as participants in the Junior Great Books Discussion Program are to learn to read more accurately, to think more clearly and independently, to express themselves more effectively, and to listen more attentively. Through an exchange of ideas in the discussion they arrive at their own understanding of the selection, find that there may be more than one way of interpreting a work, and gain respect for the opinions of others.

The questioning technique

Dewey stated that "the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt. Thinking is not a case of spontaneous combustion; it does not occur just on 'general principles.' There is something that occasions and evokes it. . ." (*3*). In a Junior Great Books Discussion, the questions asked by the co-leaders are the "something" that "occasions and evokes" reflective thinking about the book read by the group.

It is recommended that the first question asked, the *Basic Question*, be one that has no "right" or "wrong" answer but will elicit multiple responses and thus sustain the discussion for an extended period of time on a single subject. As stated in the Introduction to the Leader Aids, "The question can be considered a basic one if the co-leaders are in doubt as to what constitutes a completely satisfactory answer to it" (*6*).

The questions asked in a discussion are of three types: 1) questions of interpretation, 2) questions of fact, and 3) questions of evaluation. Basic questions are always questions of interpretation which may require the participant to

a. explain in his own words the meaning of a statement, situation, or action presented by the author (a quotation from the book is often read by the leader);
b. make and explain connections between parts of the book; and
c. offer conclusions or inferences about the meaning of what

the author says, substantiating them by citing textual evidence from the book.

Later questions, asked by a leader or any member of the group, are called *Follow-Up Questions.* They are aimed at developing ideas contained in the basic question. These questions may be prepared by the leaders in advance or they may evolve from remarks made by members of the group. They may be questions of interpretation (similar to the basic question), questions of fact, or questions of evaluation.

In a question of fact, the participant is asked to give a literal summary or paraphrase of what the author says. This type of question has a definite, specific answer.

A question of evaluation, asked following considerable discussion of the basic question, requires the participant to judge whether the author's ideas are true or applicable based on his own experiences, standards, and values. In other words, does he agree or disagree with the author, and why?

Guidelines for discussions

The leaders are not allowed to enter into the discussion with any statement or comment other than a question. Unlike a teacher, the leader's role is not one of imparting information but one of leading a discussion of the author's ideas as stated in a particular work. Instead of "talking down" to youngsters, the leaders strive to obtain deeper insight into questions for which they have unsatisfactory answers themselves. Students are inhibited by no authorities—such as parents, teachers, or teaching machines—just by their co-leaders. Leaders must learn to accept participants' answers whether they are in exact agreement with their own thoughts. Leaders may never introduce their own opinions, make comments, or answer questions. They must confine themselves to asking questions and avoid any temptation to take part in the discussions themselves.

If "taking part" meant "taking over," the whole purpose of the discussions would be destroyed. As a parent, visiting a discussion group, noted, "Each student must be allowed the exercise of independent thinking, of forming his own opinions, drawing his own conclusions. . .even when, as sometimes happens, they are all wrong. When that occurs, his peers can generally be counted on to attempt to straighten him out. . . " (2).

Participants are expected to read the selection to be discussed before the meeting. It is recommended that it be read carefully, a task which may require more than one reading. Important passages are to be underlined and comments written in the margins. These passages should include important ideas, difficult words or passages, passages with which the participant agrees or disagrees, parts about which he would like to hear the opinions of others, and passages that have reminded him of other selections read and discussed by the group. It is also suggested that each participant restate in his own words those ideas or situations which interested him most. Participants who have not read the assigned selection, prior to the discussion period, are not permitted to take part in the discussion.

The pupils are asked to discuss only the reading, backing up their statements by actual quotations from the book or by paraphrasing the author's ideas. In order to explore each question fully, participants must stick to the subject under discussion. Instead of raising their hands to speak, participants speak up freely, agreeing or disagreeing with other children. Statements and questions are addressed to the other participants, not to the leaders. Courtesy is demonstrated by speaking clearly, not interrupting when someone else is talking, and by listening attentively. A participant is urged to question others about any remarks he does not understand.

Illustrative discussion questions

A discussion of five of Aesop's fables—1) "The Wolf and the Crane," 2) "The Lion and the Mouse," 3) "The Nurse and the Wolf," 4) "The Labourer and the Nightingale," and 5) "The Lion in Love"—which appear in Set One, Volume One, of the *Junior Great Books* (4), contained the following representative questions.

Each fable deals with a promise made by either an animal or person. The basic question considered was *Does Aesop believe promises are broken because of the people who make them or the conditions under which they are made*? Follow-up questions, aimed at helping the participants explore the basic question in depth, were

1. Why does Aesop have the animals in the stories behave like human beings? (Question of Interpretation)
2. Is Aesop's advice primarily for the benefit of the person who makes the promise or the person who relies on it? (Question of Interpretation)
3. In which moral did Aesop warn the reader not to rely on all promises? (Question of Fact)
4. Do you agree that "Enemies' Promises Are Made to Be Broken"? Why? (Question of Evaluation)
5. According to Aesop, how can you tell which promises should be relied upon? (Question of Interpretation)
6. Which animal kept his promise? (Question of Fact)
7. Why does Aesop believe there are some promises which shouldn't be kept? (Question of Interpretation)
8. Does he believe that there are some promises which can't be kept? (Question of Interpretation)
9. Do you believe that promises should always be kept? Why? or Why not? (Question of Evaluation)
10. Why does the mouse in "The Lion and the Mouse" keep his promise but the nightingale in "The Labourer and the Nightingale" not keep his? (Question of Interpretation)
11. Do you believe promises are usually broken because of the people who make them or the conditions under which they are made? Why? (Question of Evaluation)

Through actual participation in a simulated discussion, persons interested in improving their skills in teaching reading learn how students' thinking can be challenged through adept questioning.

A junior great books program in action

In the spring of 1965, two groups of very capable sixth grade youngsters from eight elementary schools in Aurora, Illinois, participated in a Junior Great Books Discussion Program. A total of 33 boys and girls, attending schools within a 5-mile radius of the central location chosen for the meetings, was invited to attend. Selection of students to receive invitations was made on the basis of mental capacity, reading achievement, and interest in reading.

To the astonishment of the three leaders, who originally planned to lead a single group, 30 youngsters expressed an interest in attending. This response necessitated the formation of two groups with one leader working regularly with both groups. Although the pupils' parents were responsible for transportation, attendance in after-school sessions, held once a week, was better than that in the average classroom. The one student who "dropped out" did so because of health problems.

These beginners in the program used Set One of the *Junior Great Books,* which begins with Aesop's "Fables" and concludes with "The Jungle Books" by Kipling. The Great Books Foundation recommends that this set be used with first-year groups at the elementary school level. To read and interpret the selections in depth requires a relatively high level of reading ability for students in these grades. Application of the *Dale-Chall Readability Formula* to Volumes One and Six revealed that the average sentence length coupled with the percent of difficult words in these two volumes was equivalent to that found in material normally read at the junior high school level. (A revision of the Junior Great Books Readings will be published in September, 1967. Sets will be available for youngsters at the third and fourth grade levels; readings of a different nature will be included, and transitions from one level to another will be made more gradual than in the present sets.)

Although the sixth graders in this program came from differing school situations and varying socioeconomic backgrounds, their differences disappeared during the discussions when their common interest was the Great Books selection being discussed. All children developed into thinkers, forced to be responsible for what they said. They were compelled to use their own heads and to draw on their own experiences. Some of the youngsters were talkative; others were very shy. But most amazingly, as Florence Cunningham also reported, "They disagreed without being disagreeable!" (2).

At the beginning of the program Nelson, a frail red-headed boy with ability far above average, was extremely shy, speaking only when called upon by the co-leaders. Midway through the program he began entering into the discussions and bringing forth some excellent ideas and provocative viewpoints which nearly brought other participants to their feet in defense of their conflicting ideas. By the end of the program, Nelson had emerged from his reticency and become an enthusiastic participant who was very verbal and persuasive about the issues being discussed.

His classroom teacher observed positive changes in his oral communication skills, his ability to command respect of his peer group, and his willingness to participate in discussions within the classroom. Other teachers of regular classrooms observed that the pupils participating in the Junior Great Books discussions were suddenly "sparking" classroom discussions. Not satisfied with only factual answers, they were continually questioning and reasoning.

Although discussion sessions were an hour and a half in length, the leaders found that the time passed quickly and they soon came to realize that the discussion period was not the end but just the beginning for fertile, productive, critical thinking about the book. Participants, unable to obtain *the answers* to their questions from their leaders and possessing no referee to "settle" their differences of opinion, often continued their discussions in the cars going home and at the dinner table. This result appeared to reflect one of the principal aims of the Great Books Program—to help youngsters find meaning and purpose in life through reading and thinking.

Implications for classroom teaching

Most teachers would profit greatly from utilizing the Great Book discussion techniques in their regular classroom work. They would improve in ability to formulate good questions for class discussion; they would select more crucial and challenging issues for discussion instead of checking students' recall of minor details; and they would learn to direct discussions in such a way that capable students are challenged to think harder and quiet students are encouraged to offer their opinions more frequently. Factual information would be used, not as an end in itself, but to support interpretations, explanations, and conclusions resulting from the reading of social studies, science, or literature.

Teachers, then, like co-leaders of Junior Great Books groups, would be true leaders: ones who move ahead of their groups guiding their thinking and reacting rather than one who merely impart information so that pupils will learn what they—the teachers—know.

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Notice the *involvement* and teachers in the production of the curriculum described by DR. KITZHABER. Notice, too, that the curriculum *evolved* through a study of the situation and critical thought on how to improve the situation.

The Oregon Curriculum in Literature

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FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS the Oregon Curriculum Study Center, under a contract with the U.S. Office of Education, has been developing and testing an experimental course of study in language, literature, and oral and written composition for grades seven through twelve. The curriculum has been designed for the great majority of secondary school students—roughly the top eighty percent. Cooperating with the University of Oregon English Department in this project have been the school systems of six cities in Oregon and one in Washington (Seattle).

It has been, from the first and by design, a fully cooperative undertaking between university professors and public school teachers. Both the schools and the university have furnished selected teachers on a released-time basis to work on the series of writing committees that have produced the new curriculum—committees on which the school teachers, again by design, have regularly outnumbered the university teachers by nearly two to one. In this way we have tried to guard against writing what might be called a "professors' curriculum," one that might be quite admirable from an intellectual point of view but hopelessly ill adapted to school children and ill suited to the conditions of mass public education.

Each school system has also designated key teachers in each grade to try out the new curriculum in their own classrooms and evaluate it. These teachers have received special training, usually in summer institutes but sometimes in in-service courses, to acquaint them with the new subject matter and critical approaches they need in order to teach the experimental materials.

At the end of August, 1967, we will complete our contract and turn over to the U. S. Office of Education the last of our materials, all of which are being placed in the public domain so that whatever may be good in them will be freely accessible to anyone who wants to use it. The materials will be disseminated through ERIC, the Educational Research Information Centers.

In a curriculum-development project like this, one begins by finding out what the existing situation is and coming to some sort of opinion about it. The next step is to work out a scheme, a philosophy if you will, that seems likely to lead to an improvement over the present situation. Then one tries to create new materials consistent with this philosophy which are tried out, evaluated, revised in light of this evaluation, and tried out once more. This is essentially the procedure we have followed in writing our literature curriculum.

We began back in 1962 by studying a wide selection of curriculum guides and textbook series to see what was supposed to be taught under the heading of literature to junior and senior high school students, and we checked our impressions by visiting a great many English classes. We were pleased to find a great deal of excellent teaching being done by individual teachers. But the teaching often was good in spite of, rather than because of, the adopted textbooks and approved courses of study; and such teachers were the exception rather than the rule. It seemed to us that there were four circumstances that would have to be changed if the teaching of literature were to be improved on the wide scale that would justify the expenditure of public funds for an English curriculum project.

First, the quality of the literature that children were being asked to read ought to be improved. For a variety of reasons, a lot of what could politely only be called junk had got into the literature curriculum—in spite of the enormous riches of English and American and other literature that lay at hand, much of it well within the range of the average secondary school student.

Second, we knew already from the influential NCTE study, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*, that less than half the nation's junior and senior high school English teachers had a major in English; and we were aware that even when they were English majors, the quality of their undergraduate English training was likely to have been uneven, unsystematic, and out-dated. Any effort to improve the English curriculum would have to take the fact of inadequate teacher preparation into account and try to develop materials that would educate the teacher even more than the pupil.

Third, we were struck by the lack of any plan of ordering six years of literature study that was in any direct way germane to the literature itself. We usually found literature uneasily yoked to the social studies, with the social studies subject matter of a given year determining the choice of literature, as though literature were the mere handmaid of the social sciences. The eleventh and twelfth grades we found devoted respectively to American and English literature, both studied chronologically. The literature anthologies for the earlier years were most commonly organized around a variety of quasi-sociological themes—"Our Frontier Heritage," "Understanding Other People," or "Choosing a Career." And since the history of literature is full of authors who only occasionally, if at all, have felt impelled to write about choosing a career or appreciating our frontier heritage, the great mass of good literature that did not fit this Procrustean scheme was ignored, and the lack supplied with dubious stuff that had only the happy accident of the "right" subject matter to recommend it.

We decided that we would try to do better all around if we could. We hoped to give young people the best and most interesting literature that their intellectual and emotional maturity would enable them to comprehend, including a generous selection of what we called "reservoir literature" such as the fables of Aesop, Biblical parables, classical myths, folk tales, and ballads which are an important part of the cultural heritage that links us with past generations. We wanted to develop a six-year literature curriculum that was, in a phrase much talked of then and even now, cumulative and sequential; a curriculum in which the eighth grade built in a logical way on what had been learned in the seventh grade and pointed clearly toward what was expected to be learned in the ninth grade. Whatever plan of organization we chose, we felt that it had to be based on principles that would illuminate the literature *as* literature and be germane to the understanding and appreciation of literature as an art form and a uniquely valuable kind of human experience. We regarded literature as good in its own right, quite apart from any alleged values it might have in promoting life adjustment or social conformity—the same argument of course that must be used to justify the teaching of algebra and history and biology to children who are not going to be engineers or historians or biologists. Finally, we wanted to present the literature curriculum in such a way and furnish it with such aids that the average teacher would be helped without being robbed of initiative, and the superior teacher would be guided without being coerced. A big order, to be sure, and one we certainly have not succeeded fully in carrying out. But neither have we failed, as the generally favorable reaction of both students and teachers has made evident.

Looked at in one way, the literature program is the least novel of the three strands in our curriculum We are still having the children read stories, poems, plays, and essays. We think the literary quality of these selections is generally better than that of the typical secondary school anthology. But our real innovations are a sequential plan of organizing a six-year curriculum and (if I may use a rather forbidding phrase) a critical approach to the study of literature that we think enables both student and teacher to better understand and appreciate a poem or a story in terms of itself, not of something else presumably more important. That is, we believe that this method of study recognizes and respects the integrity of the literary work, as many other approaches now current in the schools do not; we believe that true enjoyment and appreciation wait on understanding and that only if we make an effort to teach understanding can we justify the presence of literature in an *educational* system. Enjoyment cannot be directly taught; understanding can. We make no claims of profundity or perfection or striking originality—just a reasonable consistency and a devotion to literature and liberal education and young people.

We spent a lot of time looking for a workable plan of organizing the literature curriculum. We were attracted from the first by Jerome Bruner's well-known metaphor of the spiral, and we were deeply impressed by its successful application in the new mathematics and science courses, where the central principles of the discipline were identified and taught with simple applications in the early years and with progressively more sophisticated ones as the child matured. Science and mathematics are exact studies, however, in a way that literature and the rest of the humanities are not. We were not sure that the Bruner plan would work for literature, but we searched for a way to test the hypothesis. The plan that we finally decided on was simple enough, perhaps even simpleminded. But we felt that it had to be so obvious that the pupil, not just the teacher, would be aware of it and know why he was being asked to study literature as he was, what the objectives were, and where he was headed. The plan lacked the elegance and impressive logic of the structure underlying the math and science courses; but, the nature of literature being what it is, there was no way around this difficulty.

We chose three admittedly vague general principles that, despite their shortcomings, are exhibited and may profitably be studied in any work of literature, whether essay or novel, tragedy or lyric, epic or autobiography. We call them Subject, Form, and Point of View. Let me explain what we mean by them and then show how we have tried to build our curriculum around them in a sequential and cumulative way.

Every work of literature, quite obviously, must be about something—must have a subject. *Huckleberry Finn*, in a literal sense, is a story about a boy and a runaway slave who take a trip down a river on a raft and occasionally have adventures ashore. But on another level it is about the evils of a social system which, in quite different ways, have victimized both the boy and the runaway slave. On still another level, the novel is about tolerance and understanding and human dignity and the irrelevance of skin color and social station when setting a man's true worth. The concept of Subject, then, can be discussed simply at the seventh grade level, and in progressively more complex and abstract ways in succeeding years. And always it will enhance understanding of the literary work.

Every work of literature must have Form, which is our second concept. It is admittedly broad and imprecise, yet it has served our purposes well. We take it to mean genre, at the most general level—the differences that distinguish tragedy from comedy, novel from epic, lyric from ballad, or even prose from verse. But it may be interpreted to mean also such things as rhyme and meter and stanza form in verse, plot structure and dénouement in fiction, exposition and rising and falling action in drama, or inductive or deductive methods of organization in essay or speech. Some of these are simple matters well within the scope of a seventh grader; some must be reserved for study in the upper years of high school. A somewhat arbitrary but still plausible sequence can be developed to introduce the students to significant aspects of form in literature over the six years of the curriculum.

Our third and final term, Point of View, is even more general than Form. We mean by Point of View that necessary stance or attitude that every writer must take toward his subject matter and that helps so largely to determine exactly what he will say and the manner in which he will say it. We mean also the attitude (Point of View) that a writer has toward his reader, and the attitude that he wants the reader to form as a result of reading his poem or story or other work. Finally we mean by Point of View the attitude that the reader does in fact form from reading the work, whether it is precisely the one intended by the author. On a simple level we may talk about the difference between first-and third-person presentation of stories or poems—the "I" of Browning's "My Last Duchess," the impersonal detachment of the traditional ballads. When the student is more mature, we may discuss Point of View in terms of whether the characters in a novel or poem "speak for" the author or whether the author has not, in fact, created a *persona*, a character who speaks not for the author but for himself consistently with the individuality given by the author. Still later we may consider Point of View in the widest sense as irony, satire, tragedy, or comedy—what amounts to a kind of world view pervading an entire work and sometimes, as with Jonathan Swift, nearly all the works of a writer.

Let me add two more remarks about these terms of ours. First, we are well aware that they do not among them embrace all there is to say about literature or the analysis of literature. Such matters as characterization, for example, or setting, while very real elements in fiction and drama, cannot be fitted under Subject, Form, or Point of View without straining. So we don't try, but instead we discuss characterization or setting when it is appropriate to do so without trying to establish an artificial connection with our scheme. On the other hand, a lyric poem or an essay will typically lack characterization or setting or both, yet they and all other literary types will exhibit Subject, Form, and Point of View. So our terms, though they are not all-inclusive, are universally present and so serve our purposes well enough in establishing system and sequence.

Second, as I have intimated already when defining Point of View, our three terms are all interrelated and can be separated and viewed independently only at some cost in fidelity to the literary work. A given subject will demand to be treated in a certain form, and certain forms call for certain kinds of subjects. It is hard, for example, to imagine a serious subject being successfully treated in the form of a limerick. The sonnet form, on the other hand, though once confined almost entirely to the expression of amorous sentiments, was extended by John Donne to include passionate religious views and by Milton and Wordsworth to voice political and social criticism. But it would hardly be the right form in which to try to be uproariously humorous. One of our writers, aware of the interdependence of Subject, Form, and Point of View, has likened the plan to a pretzel, each of the three elements being recognizably distinct yet obviously related to and involved with the others. In the upper grades we try to get students to see this interrelatedness, to put back together what has been taken apart only for the purposes of instruction.

I will say only a little about the specific way in which we weave these three terms in a spiral fashion into the six-year curriculum since a full explanation would be another paper. In grade seven we emphasize Subject leading students to see that, as someone has said, a story means as well as tells that there will be a concrete subject and one or more abstract subjects. In grade eight we stress Form and Point of View, the former by introducing students to other patterns of organization than the chronological and the latter by having them study literature written from a variety of technical points of view: first person, modified omniscient, and omniscient. In these years and later, technical terms are introduced when we need names to call things by in order to discuss them. In grade nine we return to Subject, at a higher turn of the spiral, dealing with more abstract matters, with themes and motifs in such works as Crane's *The Open Boat* and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and excerpts from Malory's *Morte d'Arthur.* Grade ten returns to Point of View, emphasizing irony, satire, and tragedy (in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*). The eleventh grade sums up all that has been learned so far and puts special emphasis on Form, this time through a detailed consideration of the chief genres—verse, short and long fiction, drama, and essay.

The twelfth grade represents what at first might seem to be a departure from the plan but what actually is intended to be its summation. Assuming five years of such study as we have outlined, what might we be able to do, we asked, that would help students to consolidate what they have learned and bring them to a satisfactory stopping place, both those going on to college and those ending their education here? One of the objectives of our curriculum was the hope that the experience of reading and studying good literature would affect students' literary preferences—that when, after graduation from high school, they spun a bookrack in a supermarket, for example, they might select the book that is a little better from a literary point of view rather than the one that is a little worse. We were not so naive as to hope that we would uniformly turn out habitual readers of Shakespeare and Milton, but we did hope that we might instill dissatisfaction, in students of average intelligence or better, with the cardboard characters and empty formulas of the trashier magazines and paperbacks and lead them to prefer somewhat more honest and solid fare. For this reason we have organized the twelfth grade curriculum around a set of questions that bear on literary taste, questions that deserve a more honest answer than they sometimes get. One, phrased as teachers often hear it, is "But why do we have to read this *old* stuff? As a result, we have a big unit that pairs several old and modern treatments of the same eternal themes—the conflict between the individual and the state, for example, in *Antigone* and *Darkness at Noon.* Another unit tries to help the student to a satisfactory answer to the question "Why is so much literature so hard to read—why couldn't the writer just come out and say what he meant?" Another deals with the problem of originality and triteness in literature, and still another, with the question of the moral purpose of literature, and whether or to what extent a literary work may be said to have a didactic aim. The last unit is built on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and is meant to provide an opportunity to bring to bear the results of six years of study and background on an undoubted masterpiece.

Now, since I am aware that I am speaking not to a convention of the National Council of Teachers of English but to one of the International Reading Association, I cannot end my remarks more pertinently than by trying to answer the question "What does the Oregon curriculum do to teach reading?" I think it does a great deal, and does it in a realistic and pedagogically sound way. It is self-evident that one cannot teach reading without having something to read. A literature curriculum of necessity provides reading matter, generally of high interest and considerable worth. Ours turns the attention of the students constantly on the literary text, on what is said and how it is said, an on what is stated overtly and what is only suggested or implied. They are asked to read the lines and read between the lines, observe evidence, and gather data to support generalizations.

Let me quote a few of the study questions supplied for Steinbeck's *The Pearl* in grade eight. They are representative of our approach:

> Notice the descriptive details at the beginning of the story. Why do you think the author chose these things to talk about? What kind of mood and setting is he establishing? Find other details in the first chapter that contribute to this background.
>
> What kind of person is Kino? Find a physical description. Is it very detailed? How does Kino become more real to you as the story progresses? Find details about Juana. What kind of person is she? Does she understand Kino? Does Kino appreciate her? Find examples in the text to illustrate your answers.
>
> Who is the teller of this story? In its technical sense, what is the point of view of the book? Is Steinbeck making any comment of his own through the story? What do you think he is saying? What evidence do you have for thinking so?

> Sometimes an author prepares his reader for events that will happen later in the story. This is called *foreshadowing*. See how many examples you can find of incidents that point to important happenings later on. For example, when Juana says of the pearl, "It will destroy us all, even our son," she is speaking of a possibility that actually happens later in the story. Find other examples.

This sort of activity is not an exercise in remedial reading, nor will it necessarily cultivate speed reading. These, in my view, are goals better sought outside a literature curriculum and pursued under the guidance of a specialist. The kind of study promoted by the Oregon literature curriculum should, however, encourage students to become perceptive and discriminating readers, an outcome which I take to be a chief aim of this Association as it is of those of us who teach English. If that is so, our curriculum will serve the best interests of all of us and especially of the young people for whom it has been prepared.

Criteria for selection of literature, as exemplified in a project english curriculum, are painstakingly examined by PROFESSOR SIMMONS.

A Literature Program Matched to Students' Interests

JOHN S. SIMMONS
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THE SCOPE OF THIS TOPIC so terrified me when I received it that I have since made the somewhat cowardly compromise of limiting myself to a consideration of such a literature program principally for early adolescents—that is to say, students in the junior high school. I came to this decision for two reasons.

First of all, interests in reading at various levels of a school program develop and change today with considerable rapidity. Thus, to describe a program matched to interests over a six-year span would require much more space then I have been allotted. More important, however, is the fact that I am at present associate director of a five-year project english experimental study in junior high English. In this study we at Florida State have designed three basic approaches to the study of English at grades 7, 8, and 9: one called tri-component; a second, thematic; and a third, cognitive processes. The study is in its final year; at present all these experimental groups plus a large control group in six Florida junior high schools are being tested on their development in several areas of the language arts discipline. Even before testing, however, we are reasonably confident that the major achievement of our study has come in the area of literary study. Through some intermediate attitude sampling we have found that the work in literature has been considered most popular and most rewarding by the youngsters involved. As any description of a literature program progresses, I shall allude occasionally to the study as qualification for certain generalizations.

A curriculum worker who would match his offerings in literature to the interests of his students must face these limiting factors. Foremost among these is an honest appraisal of the things he is trying to accomplish in and through the use of literature.

It is my feeling that the junior high years are those in which early adolescents are moved from the *reading* to the *study* of literature. It is during this scholastic period that literature assumes a place in the awareness of the young student that is already occupied by science, mathematics, social studies, and language, both English and foreign. If, therefore, a teacher is to direct this change in perspective, a good deal of her work must be concerned with *intensive* analysis or the study of literary works. As she attempts to do this, the whole class must focus its attention on certain selections representing characteristic structures and symbolic presentations in order to progress in the perception of the nature of literature. The choices in this study are largely and necessarily the teacher's, not the students'. Thus it would be quite inconsistent by my definition to match the *study* of literature entirely with the variant interests of all students in a given day.

Certainly there is implied here a major teaching issue, one which junior high teachers need to face squarely. The desire to get youngsters to study literature requires the teacher to strive to establish among them a whole new perspective. What was once probably not more than "Fun" to do—to read literary selections—must now be considered in a new and a more demanding light. The issue is complicated by the fact that more teachers of literature desire (and rightly so, in my opinion) to influence their students to retain the enjoyment of literary selections even as they learn to attack them in a studious manner—a paradox which I contend is unique in the secondary school curriculum.

At any rate, teachers who wish to develop an essential understanding of the nature of their students will have a hard time doing so if the curriculum in which they endeavor to develop these insights is built on student interest alone. A basic goal in virtually all literature teaching is at issue here. We wish to influence our students by exposing them to selections of increasingly high quality to become discriminating readers of literature.

A second caution of my hypothetical curriculum lies in time-honored controversy. In teaching literature how do we reconcile the matters of interest and ease of reading? One does not have to be an authority in literature or reading to know that in the post-Sputnik era literary materials, particularly anthologies developed for use at all levels of the secondary curriculum, have become more scholarly and more difficult for many early adolescents to read. A quick check of the new anthologies produced by Prentice-Hall, L. W. Singer, and the Ginn Company reveals that the tendency of the 60's is to expose students to large numbers of selections which are complex in structure and subtle of thematic pursuit. Hopefully, the works used are of higher interests to early adolescents than the offerings of the *Silas Marner-Idylls of the King* era, but even if they are, the reading difficulties they present are a factor worth careful consideration.

A further dimension of the interest-ease of reading dilemma exists in this trend among writers of adolescent fiction to works which are more complex of structure. According to a recent report by Davis in the *English Journal* (2), the typical, well-written junior novel of the past seven years is characterized by a good deal more experimentation with such structural matters as point of view, sequence of events, and use of interior monologue than was true of works prior to that time. David further reports that most well-written works of adolescent fiction still pursue topics of known adolescent interest, with certain contemporary additions such as race relations, space exploration, and other science fiction topics. Thus, today's program in literature for junior high students can still be stocked with materials of high interest, but these materials will present greater *reading* challenges than ever before.

As I consider it, this issue points to the need for sound basic instruction in reading at the junior high level. If early adolescents are to pursue their own reading interests in literature with enjoyment and without frustration, they must be adept in several basic processes. Among these are the ability to use context clues, to identify meaning in the metaphoric statement, to explicate complex narrative sequences, to summarize long passages, and to draw basic symbolic inferences. In the Florida State study, we have come to the belief that junior high students need a good deal more direct instruction in the reorganizing of complicated series of events in prose, fictional, and poetic forms. Until students can relate certain reading skills to the literature they choose, a program focused on interests will probably not function to anyone's satisfaction.

Before attempting to establish some guidelines for a literature program based on interests, I should like to propound one final inhibitory factor for your reflection. If we as teachers really allow our students to pursue their reading interests widely in our courses, we can get ourselves in a lot of trouble. The newspapers are full of accounts of what happens when well-meaning teachers of literature expose their charges to works which, much to the horror of parents, artistically describe certain vital and fundamental phases of human experiences. It is not the province of this discussion to relate some of the bizarre extremes to which the vestal virgins who guard the flame of pure and decent thinking in public schools have gone and are still going. It should be sufficient to state that there are taboos in the teaching of literature concerning some phases of life and these taboos are scrupulously observed where the sensibilities of early adolescents are involved. Again the teachers of literature in the junior high school face some vexing problems. A doctoral study by Handlan completed in 1945 found that students were reading ". . . very adult books on very delicate topics" as early as seventh and eighth grades (5). This finding must be considered, particularly if reading interests of students are to become a factor in the direction of literature study. This condition is even more true today with the increased exposure of teenagers to sex, violence, and alcoholic orgies on TV, in the movies, and in the poisonous passion (or is it passionate poison) offerings of the drugstore spindles. In his 1959 study of the characteristics of the junior novel, Dunning concluded that the form was "consistently moral and insistently didactic" (3). To me this statement means that in order to get past his inevitable censors, the writer of novels for adolescents must adopt a certain *stance* toward reality; that must necessarily limit his perspective of human experience; and, in doing so, can possibly jeopardize his broad appeal for the early adolescent audience.

Before leaving the taboos-as-restriction matter, it should be noted that Davis finds that some taboos have been violated in certain recently written junior novels he has reviewed. His implication parallels that of Witty's 1961 study of adolescent fiction:

that it has become somewhat more permissive toward the frank exploitation of boy-girl relations. Whether this is as yet a distinct *trend* in adolescent fiction is conjectural. The matter of *what* and *how much* of life can be dealt with through literary study remains, however, and must be considered in any attempt to include *interests* in such a study.

If I seem to have belabored the matter of cautions, I have done so for good reason. I feel quite strongly that no workable program of study in literature, at least at the secondary level, can follow the reading interests of its students exclusively or even too closely. Teachers who would have students participate in literature *study* must inevitably make choices among works, and these choices must be governed by several factors. Youngsters' interests in reading are, however, an undeniably potent factor in the success of any secondary school literature program, and what I shall do for the balance of this paper is to set forth some guidelines which I feel appropriate for the development of such a program.

Teachers of literature should acquaint themselves with available information on adolescent reading interests and tastes. The classic studies by Handlan (5) and Norvell (6, 7) do not relate directly to today's teen-ager, but there are some matters of fundamental concern to all teachers within them. The suggestions made by George Norvell in his published texts of 1950 and 1958 contain a long series of most pertinent suggestions for developing *extensive* reading programs—that is, for strengthening the reading of literature which the adolescent may do beyond the classroom and the uses which can be made of this reading. Dorothy Petitt's important critique of the well-written junior novel (8) should be a familiar reference, in my opinion. One of the criteria Miss Petitt established for her list of 25 best written novels was their popularity among adolescent readers, and her finding that their major common theme was the adolescent protagonist's search for self-definition is one criterion which all junior high teachers should consider. What Miss Petitt's finding implies is what Dwight Burton states so convincingly in his popular text: that the young reader's need to *emphasize* with the character, the situation, the setting, and the thesis of the work he is reading must be an ever-present consideration in a teacher's scheme (*1*). The significance of the self-definition theme among young readers undoubtedly accounts for the continuing popularity of the junior novel (as suggested by Davis) and the irrepressible concern of teenage readers with Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, Knowles' *A Separate Peace*, and Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

Since reading interest must be to some degree related to reading ability, my second suggestion is that a good deal of basic reading instruction be integrated into literature study. Effective use can, I feel, be made of a variety of literary selections in developing the ability to perceive meaning. Conventional narrative patterns should be studied after which unusual structure should be dealt with directly and consistently in class. By "unusual structures" I mean both those narrative selections which use flashback, several narrators, interior monolog, and the like, and the two other major forms of imaginative literature, poetry and drama. By making students aware of the reading problems which are present in various literary selections, we increase the possibility that other similar forms will be easier to handle and therefore of greater interest. My suggestion is that we begin in the junior high school with the novel as a tool for reading instruction in literature. It follows the narrative form with which early adolescent readers are familiar, and through the presence of well-written junior novels it offers the teachers a *range* of selections with which to meet individual abilities and interests in their classes.

My third suggestion for relating interest to the study of literature is that the teacher must approach her material with marked enthusiasm. An old saw, yes, but without this ingredient the carryover from in-class study to true outside interest has little chance of achievement. Norvell states his firm belief that teacher enthusiasm is *the* key factor in literature study in the high school (*6, 7*). And his conclusion is based on thousands of direct classroom observations made over a fifteen-year period. This fact should be evident: that when all students in a given class are reading the same text, the pressure is on the teacher to create *common* interest. The investigators, myself included, in this junior high study are convinced of the significance of the teacher's potential power as a catalyst of interest in selections which may seem boring to students who read them individually and silently.

To take this matter a step further, I contend that teachers need to make every effort to include *new* literary selections frequently in their courses of study—new, that is, to the teachers themselves. It is frighteningly easy for us to fall into monotonously stereotyped ways of dealing with the old standbys. By using the the latter works we also tend to ignore the contemporary in literature, which most directly focuses on the social and cultural milieu with which the adolescent is most familiar. So, to increase interest, try to teach varied and recent works.

Real interest in the reading of literature can be greatly enhanced by the teacher's use of several kinds of reinforcement. Works read, themes explored through reading, and literary forms appraised will probably become much more meaningful to younger students if their reading ventures are supplemented by activites which do not directly involve silent reading.

Of these reinforcement measures, one of the most effective *and* most overlooked is the use of audiovisual aids in literature instruction. Films, tapes, records, kinescopes, NET presentations are all available in abundance today and can have a tremendous positive influence on increasing understanding of an enthusiasm for works read silently. I'm not about to pull a Marshall McLuhan on you, but we do find ourselves in an era in which the electronic media wield great power over the thinking of man. The use of these media plus literary maps, drawings placed on the overhead, and construction of models have all been well received by the youngsters in our junior high as adjuncts to literature study. Such materials should not be trotted out as show pieces, however. In our study they have been related by the teacher to selections studied, and their significance has been pointed up by a wide-ranging series of discussion activities which have been built around them. I am also convinced that despite the constant exposure to the stuff, early adolescents (and their parents as well, for that matter) need careful, systematic training in the *viewing* of TV and films. An all-school viewing-discussion of the movie "Shane," conducted at FSU's University High School this year, revealed that a) adolescents miss certain subtleties in films, b) they overlook or misconstrue implications in key speeches, and c) they have trouble with generalizations evolved from viewing. With a watchful teacher as classroom leader, then, the materials can provide reinforcement to the reading literature of an intensive and dramatic nature.

Further reinforcement can be provided through oral participation. In several places the experimental curricula we developed utilized the oral reading of poetry and drama. For instance, certain plays were read aloud (with gusto) by students of average and below average ability, and then a panel of brighter students discussed symbolic meanings which the plays presented. In general, oral and choral reading have been among the most enthusiastically received activities among the students in all three of our experimental curricula. Also, we have worked hard in the structuring of reaction, both written and oral, to all works studied in the program. Refinement of the ability to react knowledgeably and critically to selections read is one of the major reading goals of any secondary school curriculum. It is the high school teacher who must take her students along these vital steps beyond basic comprehension to their realization of the possible relationships which exist between works read and other precious experiences assimilated. Careful wording of requirements and variety of approach must characterize such activities. Six book reports a year just won't do the job.

If a teacher is to promote reinforcement effectively, she must be aware of appropriate techniques in soliciting reactions. The psychologist J. P. Guilford has developed a most insightful means of categorizing questions to be asked about readings and in ordering them for optimal effectiveness. Teachers should make themselves aware of Guilford's description of questions which are cognitive memory, convergence, divergence, and value judgment and of the implications of student responses to this questioning system. Edward Gordon's essay "Levels of Teaching and Testing" (which appears, incidentally, in that soon-to-be-defunct volume, *Teaching English in Today's High Schools*, by Burton and Simmons) offers further assistance in the area of guiding response of works read independently by less-than-sophisticated students (4). In addition to learning these questioning techniques, the teacher should reward all sincerely stated reactions to imaginative literature, should involve as many students as possible in such oral considerations, and should suspend from discussion her own judgments, no matter how dearly held, until students' notions have been exhausted.

A fifth and final suggestion for linking interest with the literature program touches on the use of a particular approach to the study of literature in secondary school. While several of the more scholarly of our day occasionally clarion the irrelevance and the lack of academic sophistication in the thematic approach to literature study, our project English experience has proven it to be a most effective one with early adolescents. Of the three approaches we have read, thematic units have been most popular, have produced the best organized and most insightfully written reactions, and have stimulated the greatest amount of outside reading thus far in the study. Of course, there are many pitfalls in thematic unit teaching, but if the theme is of interest and the selections which relate to the theme are carefully chosen (accomplished by considering range of reading difficulty, variety of form, topic, and length in choosing them), the interest factor has a good chance to emerge in a literature program. Teacher enthusiasm in introducing the theme is of mighty importance because the theme must create some interest before reading begins. Then with careful selection of works and guidance of reaction, interest has a chance to *develop*. The motive in thematic teaching of literature is to create interest and involve readers actively. The presence of the theme as a matter of central concern also gives slower and less perceptive readers something to hand selection *on*. Active involvement of readers and perception of relationships, as well as being two key selling points of thematic unit teaching, are also two key measures of the success of a literature program which is purported to match growth in literary awareness with the reading interest of early adolescents.

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Unlike the other articles in this volume, this one does not take literature or literature teaching as its central theme. Instead, it is a detailed description of a federally financed special reading program for the disadvantaged. Note, though, the manner and extent to which literature and literary goals permeate the program.

The Joy of Reading Rediscovered

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THE PHENOMENAL GROWTH of student populations in the high schools of America has created widespread public and professional concern over the objectives of secondary education. With approximately ninety percent of the nation's youth enrolled in secondary schools, it becomes imperative for educators to examine closely the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to be developed through the curriculum. With the great numbers of students being educated comes a tremendous diversity in the students themselves in terms of experiential background, language facility, study habits, interests, motivations, goals, and incentives.

Further complicating the population explosion in the high schools is the explosion of knowledge. Because of constant and continuous research, new information, new facts, and new principles are being discovered at a rapid pace. Educators view, on the one hand the vast amounts of knowledge that are being constantly amassed and, on the other hand, the limited capabilities of their students to read and assimilate this knowledge. One of the greatest problems in the modern high school is the inability of many of the students to read well enough to accomplish the necessary curriculum assignments. Out of this need have developed varying kinds of reading programs in the secondary schools. The purpose of this paper is to report on a federally funded program for six high school reading centers in the archdiocese of Los Angeles. The period of reporting extended from November 1965 to May 1966, a total of six months.

In order to justify an extracurricular program for improvement of reading and language skills under provisions of Title II, Section A, of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, this major question had to be answered: Who has the reading and language skills problem? The program is intended as an "attack on the sources of poverty." As such, the participants were expected to have come from disadvantaged families.

Rationale for the program

Educational levels. According to the census taken in 1960, there are 1,521,289 adults living in Los Angeles. Of those, 225,587 (14 percent) have not completed elementary school; 90,000 have not had more than a fourth grade education; and 30,000 have no educational background at all. Every citizen is aware that inadequate scholastic opportunities result in poorly paying jobs and consequent deprivation.

Inadequate income and unemployment. In Los Angeles County the ten areas which have been designated by a recent Youth Opportunities Board study as deprived, more than 25 percent of the families are subsisting on $4,000 a year or less. Surveys show that at least 85,000 adult wage earners are forced to live on a yearly income of less than $2,000, and that 20,000 more are unemployed. These figures can only continue to mount unless immediate measures are taken to combat the functional illiteracy from which unemployability and poverty stem.

Educational problems: dropout and low achievement

Although racial discrimination can account for some measure of economic deprivation, lack of education must be held as the predominant factor. Of the eight "poverty pockets" in Los Angeles, four are of predominately Negro population and four of Mexican-American. Within these eight areas better than 25 percent of all adults have not completed elementary school.

The present secondary school dropout rate is listed as 35 percent, and achievement is very low. It is evident that not only do the present curricula need definite adaptation to meet the needs of potential dropouts and under-achievers but also that the schools must endeavor to provide means outside the ordinary course of study whereby these students may better prepare themselves for future educational and employment opportunities.

School interest—study, analysis, and evaluation

A detailed study of the problems of economic deprivation, bilingualism, and cultural lag has been conducted by administrators of Catholic high schools serving areas of poverty. Their findings closely resembled those of public school investigators and add considerable weight to the research done by the federal and municipal governments.

Their school records reveal that 23.6 percent of the students are children that have fathers who had not completed elementary school; 55 percent of their fathers have not completed high school. College graduates are extremely rare, and less than 39 percent have attended a trade, technical, or business school.

In addition, nearly half of the students' mothers work full time; of those, more than 50 percent are unskilled. Of all the mothers, 21 percent have not completed elementary school, 59 percent lack high school diplomas, and only a few have attended college or business school.

Twenty percent of all fathers and 22 percent of all mothers cannot read English at all; an additional percentage read only with difficulty. Twenty-three percent of the fathers and 25 percent of the mothers are unable to write, as well.

Because of poor educational background, the largest percentage of these parents holds jobs demanding only unskilled labor—30.1 percent. Less than one fourth of them are skilled factory operatives, clerical workers, or craftsmen. Only five percent of the fathers and two percent of the mothers could be classified as professional.

In evaluating the situation, it can be readily seen that the children of these parents are in below-average educational circumstances. They receive neither impetus to further their education or motivation to excel in it. Though the school itself cannot alter present conditions in the homes of these students, it is possible that, with adaptations and additions to the present system, it may prevent these circumstances from arising in the future.

The bilingual problem

As part of the study, schools involved made a careful examination of the bilingual problem existing in the Mexican-American communities of Los Angeles. They found that students of bilingual background composed better than 61 percent of their total school population. One school reported just under 70 percent of its students as speaking both Spanish and English before the age of ten.

Most of these, therefore, neither speak, read, nor write either Spanish or English well. This same school replied that only 11.1 percent of its entire student body had a normal or better-than-average reading ability in English—nine percent of the freshmen, one percent of the sophomores, 11.9 percent of the juniors, and 11.5 percent of the seniors. Only one percent of the latest graduating class was able to go on to a four-year college.

It is obvious that these students are in great need of remedial reading and language skills if they are to succeed either in the world of education or of employment.

Cultural lag

In a recent survey of sampling of students from these areas, it was asked whether any magazines came into homes by subscription. Nearly half of the students replied in the affirmative, but nearly 60 percent of the magazines taken were of little or no cultural or educational value; some were even morally harmful. Only two percent of all students have ready access to three or four worthwhile weekly or biweekly magazines, and 33 percent have access to only one.

It was also learned that 54.2 percent of these students have never seen a musical comedy, and 58.1 percent of these students have never seen a stage play. Better than 74 percent have never attended an opera, a concert, or ballet; and 54.9 percent have never viewed an art exhibit. Although several museums are within easy traveling distances, 39.9 percent reported seldom visiting any of them.

Summary

The foregoing narrative underlines the fact that students in the "poverty pockets" of Greater Los Angeles are enmeshed in a way of life which is contributing to ultimate demoralizaton, serious social maladjustment, and delinquent behavior. The majority are under-achievers in every way—intellectually, socially, and culturally.

The existing environmental pattern of poor educational background, which results in low income, inadequate housing, and cultural lag, cannot be remedied unless certain adaptations in present systems of education, specifically in the area of communications arts, are made.

The program and objectives

Community interest—citizens advisory committee. Soon after the enactment of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, a group of interested citizens from the deprived areas of Los Angeles met to discuss local problems and needs. From this group, members were drawn to form a Citizens' Advisory Committee which organized for the specific purpose of voicing these problems and needs and seeking possible solutions to them.

Since one of the principal difficulties lay in the area of education, it seemed logical that the local educators be consulted. After a careful study of the matter described in the foregoing section, and much discussion, local high school administrators stated that the prevalent problems of dropouts, poor performance, and future unemployability could be attacked, at least partially, through the establishment of cocurricular courses in remedial skills, particularly those of reading and language.

It was then suggested that six Catholic high schools in the target areas implement a remendial reading program: Verbum Dei, Sacred Heart, Cathedral, Salesian, Bishop Conaty Memorial, and Queen of Angels high schools. To any one of the centers students from these and nearby schools and referral agencies may come, outside of regular class hours, for specialized testing, instruction, and guidance.

Goals. The conditions found in these areas of poverty make it imperative that schools in these deprived areas initiate programs *outside of the normal curriculum* in order to provide necessary remedial education and cultural facilities for these students.

Local administrators agree that reading and language skills, while they are not the total solution, are at least a major contributive factor in the level of achievement reached by every student. In nearly every subject children are required to read, and their success or failure in that subject depends largely on their previously acquired skills in reading and language.

Through an established reading program a student deficient in these skills can be tested, diagnosed, and programed into special classes in remedial reading and language. The highly specialized instruction he receives in the reading center will be of the greatest benefit to him in his other subjects.

Relation of program to the dropout problem. The reading program will exist as a preventive against low educational status in the future. Since the deprived student can gain the free instruction and academic guidance he needs to succeed in the school situation, his performance in all academic subjects is almost certain to improve. He will read more and with mounting interest. All students enjoy doing what they do well; the successful child is not a potential dropout. Gains in academic achievement will enable these pupils to further their education after high school with increased frequency and success.

Relation to economic status. It cannot be denied that education is a primary factor in a healthy, stable economy. Because it will raise the level of academic achievement for deprived students, the reading program can contribute to their economic welfare, insofar as it will prepare them to qualify for better paying jobs. Better jobs bring better housing, more comforts, and a modicum of security.

Relation to bilingual problem. The great contribution which can be made by the reading center in defeating the bilingual problem is obvious, for the program will cover not only reading comprehension but all the remedial language skills as well—phonics, spelling, vocabulary, word attack, and pronunciation.

In the child who has lived with two languages and has mastered neither, the basic problems can be corrected through study and drill in language skills. The reading laboratory, geared as it is for very small classes and individual tutoring where necessary, can best provide the type of help these students need. The total program when implemented in the various other subjects will give the bilingual student additional practice in reading and oral language.

Relation to cultural lag. Cultural lag can be combated through the reading program both for the present and for the future. It is the firm conviction of many educators that the kind of cultural environment in which a child grows has a definite influence upon and relationship to the level of intelligence he develops. The culturally disadvantaged child lives within narrow mental confines because of the ordinary experiences of which he is deprived.

The reading program, in offering correlated enrichment activities, can partially supply those experiences which the child lacks. In addition, it can inculcate in him an appreciation of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. When the student reaches maturity and arrives at a certain level of economic stability, he will desire and be able to afford those things which will satisfy his esthetic taste.

Summary. While it is agreed that the establishment of the reading program cannot answer all the needs of the disadvantaged child, it can make significant differences in his academic, economic, and cultural status.

It is the goal of the reading program to make these changes a reality by providing, outside the normal curriculum, specialized instruction and guidance. Without it the deprived student is certain to go through an entire lifetime as an underachiever. Justice demands that this instruction and guidance be given to him.

Organization of the reading centers

Although this program was submitted in the early fall of 1964, problems in Washington and in Los Angeles delayed the funding of this program until September of 1965.

Problems in funding. The first problem was to find personnel at a time when school was already in session. The Christian Brothers released one of their reading specialists to act as program director. It was difficult to find basic reading teachers. We ultimately decided to secure good teachers from related fields and train them with an in-service program. We were fortunate in obtaining very competent experts in the field of reading to train the teachers.

A second serious problem was caused in the school itself. Because of the lateness of the hour all of the schools thought that the project would not be funded. No space was set aside for a reading center. Adjustment was difficult but gradually satisfactory provisions were made.

Problems relating to the structure of the program. A reading of our original proposal indicates that it was our intention to carry on the program partially during the school day and partially out of the school day. When funding took place, it was required that the program be conducted outside of school hours only. This condition had the following detrimental effects:

a. It seriously lessened the effect of the program on the children enrolled in school.

b. It seriously hurt the effect of the program on the people in the neighborhood.

c. It, in effect, wasted money by not allowing the maximum use of the funds spent.

Our reading program is one that requires individual attention. In effect a separate program is devised according to the need of each student. To allow for individual attention, no teacher is permitted to have over seven students in the group at any one time.

Many of the students who needed the program could not be included because of the small number possible at any one time. Many others could not stay after school. In the areas where the schools are located, it can be dangerous for girls, especially, to be out late after school. Many of our students travel a long distance to their homes.

Our program with the people in the neighborhood was difficult to mount in some of the schools. First of all, there was such a demand for the program from children in school that there was often no room for the people from the neighborhood. It would be much better for the people in the neigborhood if the school children could be principally taken care of during the school day.

Physical setup. We were able to transform areas which were specially set aside into an atmosphere quite conducive to encourage the student to rediscover or to discover for the first time the joy of reading.

Wall-to-wall carpeting was a prerequisite for the reading centers. These centers, or reading labs as they are frequently called, are usually divided into three areas: the recreational reading area with comfortable furniture, *et al.*; independent areas for use of the echo tape machine and individual assignments; and finally, an area for group instruction.

Instructional materials and equipment. Each center was provided with a variety of materials and equipment to enable the instructor to plan a program to meet individual needs.

Instructional program. Each of the six reading centers employed one full-time and four part-time reading teachers, plus one part-time clerk and custodian. The reading teachers instruct only seven pupils at one time for one hour, Monday through Friday. This organization made it ideal for individualized instruction at the local reading centers. After the Nelson and Gilmore tests were administered, each teacher then organized his class according to the needs of each pupil.

Selection of students for the centers

The program functioned both in and out of the regular school day. Students were classified into two categories, namely EYOA and LAAC. The former refer to extracurricular students while the latter were students taken from the curriculum classes. The students, mostly freshmen, were selected by the school counselor and teachers' referrals. In March of 1964 these freshmen were given a battery of tests prepared by the Scholastic Testing Service. Upon the results of the reading component of the S.T.S., which was an entrance exam for incoming freshmen, the students were selected for the program.

Conclusions

The students enrolled in the program were significantly below the standard of the student population used to establish grade equivalent standards. The reading skills of most of the students were probably inadequate to maintain average achievement in their school work. At least one fifth of the students demonstrated only a fourth grade or below reading ability. Three fourths of the students could not read at the fifth grade level. We, therefore, would anticipate that unless they break through their language barrier before they become adults, most of these students will find difficulty with job application and other activities expected of employable people who pursue a career. We may therefore expect that these students will populate the ranks of economically disadvantaged people.

In-service training for teachers

In order to establish a sound basis of instruction for such a specialized type of communication skills, an in-service reading training program was set up to aid the teacher. Five reading consultants were selected to structure and present a thirty-session program that covered the following topics:

1. Interrelationships of the Language Arts
2. Factors of Culture Disadvantage
3. Psychology in Teaching Reading and the Application of Learning
4. General Class Organization and Structure
5. Testing: Gilmore-Oral Reading Inventory—Nelson Silent Reading Test—Informal Reading Test
6. Testing and Individualizing Instruction Through Class Organization and Structure
7. Oral Language and Use of the Echo Tape
8. Small Group Instruction in the use of Specialized Materials
9. Word Recognition Skills
10. Listening Skills and Note Taking
11. Study and Reference Skills
12. Critical & Interpretive Reading Skills
13. Adapting Reading Skill to Specific Tasks: Skimming, Oral Reading, etc.
14. Reading in the Content Areas

15. Writing and Spelling
16. Evaluation

The reading program director and his staff of five reading consultants all agreed to involve the teacher and pupil early in the course of the in-service training in order to put the work shop theory into a meaningful practice. Also, problems that were bound to arise could be presented to the staff during the in-service training period.

Results of the program

Measurement of overall outcome effect. The general evaluation of the program is used here to indicate that the steps taken by the archdiocese—e.g., scheduling and training of staff, providing class time and setting, and organizing and administering the program—were adequate to the educational task.

Assuming that the students recruited were commensurate with the target population by the criteria of poverty, cultural deprivation, and bilingualism, the question is asked if these students improved their reading and language skills? If they, as a group, improved, we can say that the program was adequate to effect the average reading and language skills of the students as a group, and therefore, able to meet the educational task. We use the average grade equivalent time one (T_1) and the average grade equivalent time three (T_3) to calculate the answer to this hypothesis.

(A) Net Gain. The average LAAC student grade equivalent on the Nelson test comprehension at time one (T_1) was 5.8 and for time three (T_3) was 7.4 with a net gain in reading level of 1.6 years.

For the Nelson Test, vocabulary for T_1 was 6.4 and at T_3, 8.1 with a net gain of *1.7* years in reading level.

The average EYOA student grade equivalent T_1 on the Nelson test comprehension was 5.2 and for T_3 it was 6.6 with a net gain of *1.4* years in reading level. For the Nelson test, vocabulary for T_1 was 6.1, and for T_3 was 7.0 showing an average net gain of .9 years in reading level.

The average grade equivalent for LAAC students taking the Gilmore Oral Test at time one was 5.45 in comprehension; for the second and last time the test was given (T_2) the average was *6.34* with a net gain of *.89* years.

The EYOA student average was *4.94* on T_1 and *5.25* on T_2 with a net gain of about *.3* years. For the same component the average grade equivalent score of the LAAC students with the accuracy results, taking the Gilmore test at the first of the semester, time one, was *5.27* and for T_2, *7.02* with a net gain of 1.75. The EYOA students showed a smaller gain of *1.14* with a T_1 average of *4.54* and an average T_2 of *5.68*.

On the Gilmore Comprehension *79.7* percent, 145 out of 182 students, received a grade equivalent to less than the fifth grade at the first of the program. By the end of the spring semester 43.5 percent, or 134 out of 308 who completed the exam, read below the fifth grade level. The vocabulary grade equivalent scores on the Gilmore test showed a comparable shift.

The Gilmore test has been considered more valid for these students by several of the head reading teachers. They reported that there was less text anxiety and less of a chance to *luck out* by guessing.

The findings indicate that the amount of improvement was slightly more than that which we would expect over a school year. The net gain for the two populations (EYOA & LAAC) was 1.6, 1.7, 1.4, .9 on the Nelson and .89, .3, 1.75, and 1.14 on the Gilmore. The program lasted only about six months. There is, therefore, some indication that progress in reading improvement was greater because of the program. In the absence of a control group, the extrapolation that there was some limited improvement is founded on the assumption that these particular students would have made "normal" reading level improvement of one year over one year's time.

These students may have been unable to profit from the "normal" curriculum, and their reading level might not have changed at all without the program.

The findings are not conclusive, only indicative that the agency could improve the reading and language skills of students in the program.

Reading level. Modifying the hypothesis slightly might improve the basis for a conclusion. If the percentage of students who were reading below the 5th grade level can be appreciately reduced during the program, we could conclude that the educational task proposed had been accomplished.

There were 59 students, or 20.5 percent of the 288, who scored a grade equivalent below the fifth grade level in vocabulary when they first took the Nelson Silent Reading Test. At the end of the semester there were only 21 out of 309, i.e., 6.8 percent who received a grade equivalent on the vocabulary section of less than the fifth grade.

The comprehension grade equivalent on the Nelson test, time one, had a distribution of 92 below the fifth grade and 192 at the fifth grade level or above. By the end of the semester, only 43 out of 309 scored below the fifth grade level: Only 13.9 compared with 32.4 percent time one—who were below the fifth grade level in comprehension.

Considering these changes, it is necessary to conclude that the archdiocese program was adequate to effect the remedial reading problem of many of the students, who most needed the program.

Changes in attitudes, self-image, interests and appreciations. During a visit to one of the reading centers in Watts, a member of the Federal evaluation team informally asked five boys this question: "Do you think that this reading program was a benefit to you?"

Here are their candid answers:

1. I was able to get a job because I could answer yes to the question, "Can you read?"
2. I am more able to read to my younger sister and brothers at home.
3. I have read a book from cover to cover for the first time.
4. I know that I'm doing better in other classes.
5. At the beginning of the school year, I was classified 172 in the freshman class; now I rank 48 in class standing.

It is interesting to note comments made by various teachers in the program.

One school states that one of its goals for November and December is "to try to find a story for each girl so that it would *catch* her and she would feel she had to read it." This makes more specific the goal of stimulating interest in reading.

December report on L.B.: "She was dropped from the program because of irregular attendance at reading classes. She did not listen carefully [illegible] derstand much."

April report on L.B.: "L.B. has exhibited increased effort since learning of the gains she registered on the Gilmore Oral and Nelson Reading tests. She missed only one class in April."

One of the head teachers reflected the extent that appreciation and enjoyment of reading skills had become a part of the program with the following:

> The high light of this month's activity was our first awards assembly, which we celebrated with all pomp and panoply. Thirteen girls received certificates in public. The presentation was made by our Vice-President Father Croal. Other girls who were not present had to receive their certificates privately. But public and private, this was the big surprise and news of the month. City Press sent a photographer to cover the event so there should be a release this next week.
>
> I wish words could convey the happy, working situation which prevails in the reading classes. The children have really *come alive,* are enjoying reading, and with it sensing power in their own ability. This is a new draught for them, and it is proving a rather heady one.

Another school can boast of a library for their reading laboratory that includes material of vital concern and current interest: *What is Jazz? Negro Poetry for Young People, The Glory of Negro History*, and at least 200 others, ranging through the classics to the best pleasure pulp, from Spilliane and Steinbeck to Dickens and Poe.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the truly educated person is one who is motivated to go on learning in an independent and creative manner. The ability to read effectively is one of the tools which motivates an individual to continue to analyze, examine, explore, discover, experiment, and innovate. The truly educated person continues throughout his lifetime to increase the efficiency of his reading skills. This philosophy is apparent in the words of Goethe on his eightieth birthday, "Today I am eighty years old. I have been reading all my life, but I cannot yet say that I have learned to read well enough."

In a lively, thought-provoking manner DR. GUNN routs selected past practices which deter would-be modern programs. She proceeds to examine promising literary instruction trends for the future.

Sacred Cows: Real and Fancied

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ALL OF YOU KNOW how a roadblock can interfere with traffic. In particular, those of you who have been to India know how sacred cows can impede traffic flow and add their special fragrance to the process. In evaluating the traditional program in literature, I should like to speak of two sacred cows that we have permitted to interfere with our effectiveness in making literature a viable part of pupils' lives.

The phrasing of my topic is critical in tone. In today's lexicon the word "traditional" connotes looking at life—to use Marshall McLuhan's words—through a rear-vision mirrow. So let me admit at the start that my bias is showing.

Unmodified, traditional patterns in any aspect of life hardly equip us for mid-twentieth century living. More importantly they do not prepare our pupils for living in the twenty-first century. I recently visited NASA at the Cape Kennedy Space Center and Cape Canaveral and in spite of having done my homework, nothing I have ever experienced has made me feel more like the Neanderthal woman! The discrepancies between yesterday and today in science are obvious and staggering.

The discrepancies in the humanities are different and less obvious, but they are also staggering. Does not the full development of man demand education not only of his intellect but also—and maybe even more so—of his emotions, his imagination and his spirit? And these are the central concerns of the study of the humanities. Forces in our times indicate more is at stake here than ever before. As a result, the traditional program in literature—good as it may have been but static in its influence, limited in its scope, and arbitrary in its methods—must be brought abreast of today's demands. I shall, therefore, pick up the clue in my topic and direct my discussion to major weaknesses in the stilloperative traditional program and to suggestions for modifying it. This brings me to my first obstructive sacred cow, *Content.*

Sacred cow: content

Characteristics. This sacred cow, and a real and formidable one she is, has good blood lines and can trace her ancestry back to the dim beginnings of program we now call English. The weight os such ancestry was, and is, formidable. She has two dominant traits: rigidity and narrowness.

Rigidity is evident in the sacrosanct list of titles which solidified into the traditional course of study. By the end of the 19th century, according to Mersand (*3*), the Commission on Admissions to New England Colleges formulated the requirements in English, and the custom of prescribing certain masterpieces in English literature was born and, may I add, grew lustily. Textbook writers edited and publishers produced the prescribed texts (at 12¢ per title), some of which contained for the teacher's guidance samples of the college entrance examinations of previous years. Here you will recognize a still-venerated golden calf—a lineal descendent of the original cow—the inevitable slanting of teaching toward the examinations. The *Regents Review Books* in current use in New York state are a case in point. You will sense too the implied purpose toward which the program was geared—getting pupils into college—and you will discern also the shadow of an unsavory but lively cow—the unspoken attitude that pupils who were not going on to college were somehow slightly beneath our elevated, scholarly, literary noses. Fortunately, this particularly noisome phantom is gradually fading away.

By 1920 the CEEB (SAT) tests recognized that the old listing was inadequate to define the scope of our literary heritage, and their emphasis on detailed knowledge of specific titles shifted to power questions which tapped wide reading and emphasize independent critical abilities and insight. During the next two decades the rigidity of the prescribed listing began to soften.

Granted our noses were lowering and we were recognizing the pupils for whom the four-year liberal arts college was not the goal; we were, nevertheless, still genuflecting. Our idea of modification was based on the quaint superstition that all pupils must read the same books at the same time. So we watered down the old titles often by the inept, singularly arrogant process of rewriting and simplifying. I am speaking here not of the necessary and frequently excellent translations of the Greek classics but of the pedestrian, flat-footed writing down of books originally written in English. Why couldn't we just wait a year or so and teach them later?

Randall Jarrell (2), in his delightfully satiric collection of essays, "A Sad Heart at the Supermarket," says in part:

> The greatest American industry . . . is the industry of using words . . . and yet the more words there are, the simpler the words get. The professional users of words process their product as if it were baby food and we babies: all we have to do is open our mouths and swallow. Most of our mental and moral food is quick-frozen, predigested, spoon-fed. . . . Our century has produced some great and much good literature but the habitual readers of Instant Literature cannot read it, nor can they read the great and good literature of the past. Everything has to be palatable, timely . . . immediately comprehensible to everybody over, and to many under, the age of eight.

In spite of significant changes in testing, in spite of the broadened reading lists used by the leading public and independent schools, in spite of the range of competencies and needs known to exist within and outside of the college-bound groups, and in spite of freedom to change, modification of the old listing has lagged.

My purpose here is not to comment on the equality of the listing but rather on the rigidity of its effect. Custom dies hard. That stiff old cow has shrunk and withered but her influence lies heavy across the land. Her disciples are almost superstitious in their devotion. Why? But this is another cow. I shall deal with her later.

The second characteristic of our sacred cow, Content, is limited scope. Narrow and thin but bulging in certain areas, this old cow could have ranged and fed widely, but she didn't—satisfied for a variety of reasons with a thin, unbalanced diet. Nevertheless, her staying power has been phenomenal.

In the study *Instruction in English* which Dora V. Smith (6) made 35 years ago, she listed the 30 classics most frequently used in English courses (*7-12*). In that historic listing the top entry, as I don't need to remind you, is . . . What? Of course, *Silas Marner*! The second was *Julius Caesar*, and competing for third place were *The Tale of Two Cities*, *Idylls of the King*, and *Ivanhoe*.

Of the 30 titles 18 were from English literature; 7, from American literature; 2 from other foreign sources; and 3 (collections of titles) were a combination. Contemporary literature was conscpicous by its absence, except as represented in collections. Even then, Dr. Smith reminds us, liberal courses of study and far-seeing supervisors were suggesting notable improvements. Yet, a study made two years ago by the NCTE indicated the presence near the top of the frequency list of our omnipresent, ubiquitous, indestructible *Silas*! Nowhere in this early list, nor—with heartening exceptions—in many schools today, is there exposure to the great classic myths in translations, or to appropriate examples of European, much less Oriental, or good contemporary literature. This adds up to significantly narrow reading fare for the young-adult population of the world's greatest power, doesn't it?

Why were the programs throughout the country so limited in breadth? Why are they so limited now? Is it because of fear, fear of new titles to which the paths have not been clearly beaten? Is it apathy or, more kindly, is it fatigue? Is it simply easier for the heavily-scheduled teacher to teach what he has already taught or what he himself had read as a student? Is it fear of controversy? Is it ignorance and the timidity bred of it which causes reluctance to meet the threat of the new, extensive reading program? Probably it is a combination of all of these, but, I submit, the main cause lies in the preparation of the teacher.

Causes. That these two traits, rigidity and narrowness, persist, everywhere apparent, is explained in large part by the literary background of those who teach. Quite plainly, that content cow gets most of her sustenance from traditional-ridden English departments.

It's axiomatic that one cannot teach what he does not know and that he cannot teach well if he does not know how. Or, to put it another way, if teachers are prepared to teach only the titles of the traditional program, that's what they'll teach. Consequently, the colleges and universities which prepare teachers must be jolted into meeting mid-twentieth-century needs. The 1961 NCTE study, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (4), appraises the offerings of 2,000 institutions preparing teachers of English for the secondary schools. Their findings are revealing and significant. The most frequent offerings are in English literature, American literature, and Shakespeare. Most specialists agree that this work is vital. Two thirds—but only two thirds—of the 2,000 institutions require work in these areas. Beyond this number there is even less agreement.

Only one third of the institutions require work in world literature. Only one fifth require work in contemporary literature or in literary criticism.

Yet, many secondary schools provide courses—especially on the upper levels and for the able pupils—in which critical analysis or "close reading" of texts is presumed. In the light of this growing trend, the scarcity of requirements in this field assumes pointed significance. According to the report:

> During the past twenty years approaches in literary criticism in methods of teaching literature have shifted perceptibly. Much less emphasis is placed on the old historical approach and much more on critical analysis. To find that only 29 percent of students planning to teach in high school with a major in English are required to complete a course in literary criticism or in critical analysis of literature is disconcerting, especially since it seems unlikely that those educated only in broad survey courses can be well prepared for the new approaches.

Few of the total 2,000 institutions require work in literature written for adolescents:

> Between grades 7 and 10 especially, high school teachers teach many books especially written for adolescents, both classics such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Treasure Island,* and good recent books like *The Yearling, Johnny Tremain,* and *On to Oregon.* Conventional courses in literature pay little attention to such selections.

Although the most notable deficiencies in the preparation of English majors lie in the areas of world literature, contemporary literature, and in methods of literary criticism, an even more significant fact is that between 40 and 60 percent of those now teaching English do not have even the traditional major in English! Small wonder, isn't it, that the sacred cow Content moves along—sleepy, stolid, stubborn, and undistrubed? That the traffic has moved as well as it has it something of a minor miracle.

I do not want to appear to be a Cassandra or, to paraphrase the late Lillian Smith, a person to whom the word *hope* is an unprintable four-letter word. So let me mention two encouraging trends: 1) the impact of the institutions which *are* giving excellent preparation and 2) the growth of in-service and NDEA opportunities for enriching backgrounds in literature.

Sacred cow: method

The second sacred cow, Method, is different from, but closely related to, Content. Varied and conflicting are the winds that have blown over the hide of this venerable but tough old creature. Two of her traits concern us here: approaches and organization.

Approaches. The body of literature itself is important, but quite possibly ahead of it in importance is what happens to the pupil on contact with that literature—old or new. What are the procedures that turn mere contact into genuine experience with literature? How do we know when it happens? Some of the traditional approaches must have worked, or many of us wouldn't be here. But how can we do a better job with the changing numbers and needs of pupils and of society? These questions, easy to ask, are complex to answer. Fortunately, there is likely never to be any one answer. Our tastes are too variable of our pupils and we are of too infinite a variety. Our methods swing in a wide arc. We seem to get caught up in the either/or polarity—the all-or-nothing-at-all point of view. We do one thing to excess, have a violent reaction against it, and swing to excess in another direction. One controversy waxes as another wanes.

As long ago as the nineteenth century, leaders were in revolt against the method which merely prepared pupils for examinations. According to Joseph Mersand (3) the rebellion was also strong against the analytical method. The superintendent of schools in New York City was inveighing against the overanalysis of poetry which, according him, "merely killed the goose and didn't even get you an egg for your pains." Courageous teachers in Chicago were advocating inductive teaching—the raising of questions instead of the stating of facts. And as recently as the current issue of *College English*, John Gerber, calling our discipline untamable, says "The Madison Avenue boys would probably say in their quaint and flashy way that we have a tiger in our classrooms" (*1*).

In the welter of classroom procedures of the last 150 years, Gerber discerns two major trends and a third one emerging. The first, *engagement*, puts its emphasis on the reader's moral and emotional involvement; the second, *detachment*, puts its emphasis on the literature itself; and the emerging third one, *electicism*, puts it emphasis on both.

The idea underlying the first approach was that literature was to be read for moral instruction and for pleasure. This idea stretches back to Horace. But in the schools, as distinct from the colleges, the emphasis was primarily on literature as moral instruction. As Gerber says,

> McGuffy's famous readers are illustration of books in which the selections have been chosen for their melancholy moral truths . . . McGuffy had a knack amounting to genius for spotting the drearily didactic.

At its worst this approach became dry sermonizing. At its best it taught literature as a great and vital force in everyday life.

The inevitable reaction set in and manifested itself in the second major trend. Here the teaching aimed at understanding and objective analysis and focused on the literature itself—not on its sermon, not on its history, not on the psyche of the author nor his relations with his parents, not on the sociology of the period, and not on the mythic approach which sees in modern literature a restatement of the ancient myths of our culture. There are the evidences of what Pollack calls "the literature for" movement: literature for its moral lesson, literature for social understanding, and literature for human relations. In contrast, looking at it, and *only* at it, this "new criticism" put literature itself sharply into focus. Getting as it does inside the skin of the poem, the play, or the novel and viewing it as an art form it is a more scholarly approach. This view has had a marked effect on the secondary and even the elementary school. Evidence lies in the shift away from main emphasis on *What, When, Where* questions, which rest mainly on simple recall, to *How* questions which probe more analytically into the complex of the author's craft. (Presumed here, of course, are the higher-level reading skills: reading critically, appreciatively, creatively. Obviously, the territory of the literature program, traditional or modern, is a dark continent to the youngster who hasn't yet mastered essential reading skills.)

How questions tend to lead the pupil to appraise the architecture of a work. They have to do with rhetoric, with the means or techniques by which the author achieves his effects. Such questions deal initially with fairly obvious matters such as plot, setting, theme, character, or meter. Then they progress to more complex matters such as: form, diction, symbols, tone, and point of view.

The new critics, as the now-aging leaders of this revolt were called, provided a healthy antidote to the use of literature as the handmaiden of alien purposes. But the devotees developed their own excesses and fell into the old arid trap of excessive analysis. Who was it that said of teachers that our fingers were tipped with mold from the dissection of dead books? Nevertheless, respect for literature as an art form grew and prospered.

The third trend now seeming to emerge, eclecticism, combines both involvement and detachment. Some teachers doubt that these divergent points of view can be blended successfully, saying that it is much like an attempt to have "art for art's sake and eat it too." But I would ask, "Why not?" It seems to me to be eminently sensible. Isn't using different approaches to a literary work akin to using different maps to the same territory? Each map illuminates one specific aspect. The Mercator projection has one kind of value; a geodedic survey, another; and a relief map, still another. We choose the one or the several in terms of our particular and changing purposes.

One map to the literary terrain is basic—in this case the close-up, critical approach. Using it, we see clearly and specifically just what we are dealing with. Then we may choose other maps. With them we see the relevance of this particular literary territory to other aspects of the world—its relevance to history, to today's events, to our own individiual concerns. The reader in sequence becomes both detached and involved. So, literature becomes not only more understandable but more personally meaningful. Why should we limit pupils to one "map" or approach to literature any more than we would to only one kind of map in social studies?

Many colleges, NDEA Institutes in English, and leading schools are already stressing varied approaches. Evidence of this healthful combination lies in the addition of increasing numbers of *Why* questions to the *What* and *How* questions. These more probing ones seek to lead the pupil beyond understanding and interpreting literature to applying it meaningful to his own life. They encourage him to seek answers to his own frequent question "So what?" We're making headway when a youngster is *with it* to the extent of writing in his copy of a play, as a junior-high youngster in a inner-city school in Boston, wrote, "That cat really swings."

Rosenblatt (5) strongly supports this idea of involvement in her article in the *English Journal* for November 1966. Calling literature a "performing art," she conceives of all approaches as a means of helping the pupil to enter more fully into the literary experience. She stresses the extremely personal nature of the literary experience as the reader *performs* in relation to the text and lives through and recreates it for himself. Doesn't this combination of approaches enhance a pupil's total experience? If he is reading Willa Cather's *My Antonia*, or T. S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, or Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, is he not helped to greater understanding if he views the work as a successfully constructed art form or as a vivid recreation of events or persons? if he sees it in relation to a period? or if he becomes vicariously involved with the characters? In so doing is he not more likely to emerge from it with a little more awareness, sensitivity, and wisdom about life?

Organization. The second characteristic of the Method Cow is *organization*. In the traditional program the teachers followed passively the textbook organization, which was usually chronological. According to this time-honored pattern the survey started with selections antedating Chaucer, and if the teachers were lucky and didn't get mired down in the poetry of the Romantic Period, they surfaced along about the last of May with Thomas Hardy, but rarely with anyone more recent. If this approach slipped a little, it resulted in a course in history. It was slow and dull and unrelated to anything outside of class. But it was neat and orderly.

A second venerated pattern of organization was by genre or form. Pupils read stories, plays, poems, and essays in bunches. One advantage of this plan was that it focused attention on the literature itself and developed skill in handling the different literary types. If the teachers were well prepared and effective, this organization, which usually included close reading, could become—especially for the better pupils—illuminating, rewarding, and exciting.

A third and newer pattern of organization is thematic, in which selections are chosen in terms of their releveance to theme or topic. In junior-high school such topics might be "Action and Adventure" or "Mystery and Suspense." In senior-high school a theme might be "The Changing Concept of the Hero." This pattern, of course, presupposes skill in reading different literary forms. One distinct advantage of this unit pattern is that it encourages wide choice of materials on many different levels of difficulty for the eager, the able, the disenchanted, and those in between. Another advantage is the opportunity it provides for individual and for small-group reading and for creativity in reporting back to the total group, orally or in writing. It also provides for integrating the work in language and composition with the work in literature.

A fourth pattern, fortunately growing in acceptance, organizes literature within a humanities framework. This pattern integrates not only the areas of English but also cuts across subject-matter divisions and correlates literature with other expressions of man's creativity, especially with art and music. This plan for enriched experiences usually requires team teaching and can be exceptionally rewarding.

Materials. Implicit in these modifications in the traditional program are two other changes: the shift from reliance on one single textbook to the use of multiple, diversified texts, many of them paperbacks and owned by the pupils; a shift to the use of outside resource persons; to the use of aids such as recordings, films, tapes, field trips, and TV. Very possibly, contemporary man may not be wholly literate unless he is literate not just in one but in umpteen media. Our appeals better be made not only to a pupil's visual sense but to several senses. Surely we should take advantage of the effective means at hand to make the literature program come alive in our own time. Maybe we should "dare to disturb the universe" and begin to get where the action is.

Conclusions

The traditional program in literature is becoming more flexible, more extensive, and more enriched. Once inertly dependent on titles that meant more to the crumbling than to the growing, the program now—like Janus—looks both ways, respecfully at our rich literary heritage and broadly and expectantly at our own times. It is becoming one of vital, relevant literary study, maintaining intimate contact with morals, with ideals, with beauty. It is concerned with literature *as* literature and with the pupil *as* man as it strives to bring them together so as to ignite a spark that may make him imperceptably, but significantly, better.

Although the phantoms of earlier sacred cows may still exist, the road is opening. The traffic is flowing more freely. So half in fun—but wholly in earnest—may I wish you and your pupils, "Happy Motoring"!

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